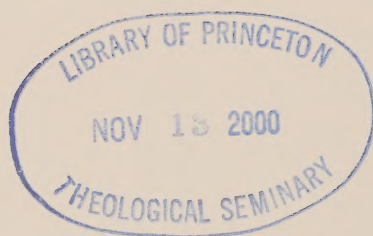




**THE DIVINE PURPOSE EXPLAINED**



THE  
DIVINE PURPOSE EXPLAINED,

OR  
ALL THINGS DECREED;

YET EVIL NOT CAUSED,

NOR  
MORAL FREEDOM IMPAIRED;

AND  
THE GLORY OF GOD, THE END OF ALL.

BY THE  
REV. GEORGE MORTON.

PHILADELPHIA:  
JOSEPH M. WILSON,  
No. 111 SOUTH TENTH ST., BELOW CHESTNUT ST.  
1869.

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WILLIAM W. HARDING, STEREOTYPED.



## PREFACE.

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To show *How* it is that though all things are decreed, yet the decree is not the cause of sin, and that man acts freely in doing what is decreed; and, also, to assign a satisfactory reason for the existence of moral evil, are the things aimed at in the following pages. It will freely be acknowledged that if the attempt has been successful, relief may be afforded to many a mind, anxious for some plain and satisfactory explanation of these matters.

The subjects treated are confessedly among the most difficult and profound in the whole field of theological research. And if all obscurity be not removed, and clear and satisfactory results not reached, on all points, it will not be esteemed as anything remarkable. For though the greatest minds, and the finest talents and attainments have been exercised with these themes, much still pertains to them, very obscure and hard to be understood. And the metaphysical disputations, which have been so much indulged in, on these topics, have probably been attended with but very little advantage. Such is certainly the case, at least in relation to a large class of those, who on these subjects are anxious for information.

And the wants of the masses of Christian people, whose minds have not been cultivated by a liberal education and literary pursuits, have been kept especially in view in the preparation of the work. Chiefly for them have we written; and should no pleasure be ministered to the refined literary taste, this will be received as some extenuation for the deficiency.

And with our main purpose in view, everything of the nature of metaphysical disquisition has been avoided, as far as it possibly could, considering the nature of the subjects under consideration. There is also more diffuseness of style than if the object had been different. And it is believed that the most strictly logical method of treating a subject, is not the best adapted to bring it fully within the comprehension of minds untrained by literary discipline and thought. And, therefore, the same truths and ideas may be met with, in different connections and in varied aspects; and designedly so, in order that they may the more certainly be apprehended and fixed upon the mind. And though on some points a more extended elucidation might have been desirable, yet this has been dispensed with, in order that the work might be easily within the reach of those for whom it is especially designed.

The usual practice of giving the chapter and verse, with Scripture quotations has not been adopted. It is supposed that at the present time, and in this land of Bibles, their insertion is in a great measure a useless additional expense. There is not one reader in a hundred, who has any desire to turn to the Bible to read the text there. When the Scripture quotation is given, it is known to be such, and usually there is no anxiety to know just where it is to be found. And if it is practicable to dispense with the insertion of chapter and verse without much disadvantage, it is certainly to be preferred, because when placed in the body of the work, they are a serious obstruction in the way of the reader. It is difficult to read on without reading them, and in reading them the mind is diverted from the thought with which it was engaged, and a real interruption is thus encountered, which it is not possible to avoid. And to insert them in the margin does not wholly remove the difficulty, and is an increase of trouble and expense with scarcely any advantage.

It is not to be expected that this work should escape the common fate of Calvinistic controversial writings, which is to be garbled and misrepresented, and especially when made the subject of discussion by the public speaker. And when a sentence or part of a sentence is severed from its legitimate con-

nection, by the art of declamation it may be wrought up into a horrible picture, and monstrous views set forth as those of the author, not difficult to meet, and the mere statement of which is enough for their refutation; while the author's views, or any refutation of them, may be the most remote thing imaginable from the minds of both speaker and hearer. For often it is the case in these declamatory harangues, that the hearers get not so much as a solitary glimpse of the writer's views; and anything like a refutation of them is, of course, impossible. And though all ought to know that declamation is not argument, yet there are not a few, who are satisfied with it, and even consider it as argument of the very best kind, which doubtless results from the fact, that they are incapable of comprehending any other. And often too, the speaker finds the subject unmanageable in any other way; and when arguments cannot be answered, it is safer to leave them out of sight, or substitute declamation for reasoning and proof. And thus it may be accounted for, that on some occasions there is such a lack of argument, while declamation so exceedingly abounds. But declaiming is not proving a doctrine to be erroneous, nor is it taking up an argument and showing it to be fallacious and unsound.

While endeavoring to explain subjects encompassed with many difficulties, to be guided by the Word and Spirit of God, has been both the design and desire in every part of the work. On topics of this kind the speculations of mere human wisdom, when prosecuted without regard to the teachings of Divine Truth, are certainly of very little value, and ought to be so regarded. Without Heaven's Revealed Light, man's light is but darkness, his wisdom is but folly, and the more of his light he sheds on such subjects, usually the more obscure they become. If a man's light that is in him "be darkness, how great is that darkness!" And how can he else than "darken counsel by words without knowledge!" "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." And if there be anything in the work not in harmony with the precious Word of God, none would repudiate it more readily or sincerely than the author.



To know the *Truth*, and to aid others in knowing the *Truth*, has been the principal design. If it has failed, it was not for lack of desire to know and teach the *Truth*, and nothing but the *Truth*. "Buy the truth and sell it not," is the injunction of the Word of Truth, and implies that the truth is of inestimable value. It is through the knowledge of the truth that men are saved. "And ye shall know the truth," saith the Saviour, "and the truth shall make you free." And an inspired apostle says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." And another says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed; but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." All of which teach that the truth is of exceeding great value, and worthy to be sought for, with prayerful diligence, and persevering application. And if the author knows his own heart, it is his privilege to rest in the consciousness of having sought for nothing but the truth. And from love to it, not without much prayer and meditation, has the effort been made, to explain the truth, and set it forth for the benefit of others. The work has not been sent out after a brief and hasty investigation of the subjects treated; for with much thought, and long protracted meditation, it has been prepared. And the main positions taken have been well considered, and scrutinized in their various aspects and bearings; though that elaborate elucidation of every point, which might free it from objection and remove all doubt, has been precluded by the limited nature of the work. But it is sent forth to the Christian public, with the fond hope that, notwithstanding its imperfections, it may not be unacceptable; and may contribute somewhat to their stores of religious knowledge, and afford some assistance in the elucidation of subjects both difficult and hard to be understood. If God will graciously acknowledge it, and by his blessing make it instrumental in building up his people "on their most holy faith," and in promoting the cause of righteousness and truth, the author will then have realized a very great reward.

PHILADELPHIA, *May*, 1860.

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# THE DIVINE PURPOSE EXPLAINED.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE Divine Purpose is a subject of exceeding great importance, and ought to be one of very much interest to all; for, is there any way in which we can so well attain to a correct knowledge of God as to become acquainted with his purpose? And will not correct views of the Divine purpose tend to awaken right feelings towards the Divine Being? It is by the unfolding of his purpose, that the Lord manifests his glorious and everblessed character; and thus draws the hearts and affections of his intelligent creatures to himself, in admiration, love, and obedience. And the chief aim of the present work, is not so much to prove the reality of the Divine purpose, as to unfold its nature and design.

But that the Divine purpose is a reality, both Scripture and reason afford abundant proof; for, if "the Lord hath made all things," surely it was not without purposing to do so; and surely he could not purpose to make and manage all things without a plan to be pursued. Every intelligent being, who undertakes to ac-

comply with any thing, has some plan in relation to it—some end in view, and some plan to secure that end; to engage in it without a plan, would be characteristic of sheer folly. And how could we ascribe to the infinitely wise Creator what would be a sure sign of the want of wisdom in any of his creatures?

It might seem needless to say that God manages his affairs according to a fixed plan—that he acts neither from instinct nor at random. To suppose him to act from instinct, would be to put him on a level with the brutes. And to suppose him to act at random, would be to put him on a level with a simpleton, or at least with a mere experimenter, who acts at random for the purpose of gaining knowledge. But God is infinite in knowledge, and therefore knows precisely what the result would be of every possible operation; and hence, it would be impossible for him to act at random, because the result of his action must be known to him before the action is performed. And therefore all he does, he does from design; whatever he does, is that which he purposed to do. And since it is impossible for God to do any thing without having purposed to do it, it then follows that his management of the universe results from his purpose. But if he purposed to manage the affairs of the universe, he purposed to do it in a certain definite mode, because it was impossible for him to be ignorant of the mode in which he would do it. Well now, as it is thus obvious that God has purposed to manage the affairs of the universe in a certain definite mode, it follows that he has fixed a plan according to which he will manage those affairs; for, purposing to do any thing in a definite mode, is just fixing a plan for the doing of it.

And we thus reach the conclusion, that God has a fixed and settled plan according to which he manages the affairs of the universe. And this is his *purposed* plan; that is to say, it is his decreed plan. And if the plan be decreed, all the parts of it must be decreed. If it were decreed to make a chain of forty links, then every individual link of that chain would be decreed. And so, if God's plan be decreed, all the affairs embraced in that plan must be decreed. The plan embraces all its parts, and these are all the affairs of the universe of God. And it follows, that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

But the Word of God is our only sure guide on this subject, and we appeal to its testimony. In writing to the Ephesians, the apostle says: "In whom also," that is in Christ, "we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." It is here stated that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. "After" here signifies agreeably with, or according to—he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. The *counsel* of his will is the decision of his will. It is that result which follows the action of the Divine will. God wills to do a certain thing, and what he wills to do is the counsel of his will; that is, what he decides upon is the *counsel* of his will. And what he decides upon is his purpose, or determination, or decree. Hence, then, the *counsel* of his will is the same thing as the *purpose* of his will. To prove that the Divine purpose or determination and the Divine counsel are one and the same, the two following passages from Isaiah are sufficient. Of Egypt it is said:

“Because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts which he hath determined against it.” It is obvious, that here the Lord’s *counsel* and *determination* are one and the same thing. In relation to Cyrus it is said: “Calling a ravenous bird from the East, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, and I will also do it.” A *counsel* which is *executed* is manifestly a *purpose*; and hence *counsel* and *purpose* must be the same. And what is called *counsel* in the first clause of the verse is called *purpose* in the last; and this puts it beyond cavil, that the Lord’s *counsel* and *purpose* are the same. And hence it is evident, that to work all things according to the counsel of his will, is to work all things according to his purpose or determination. And the language undoubtedly signifies that God works all things according to his decree, because his decree and the counsel of his will, or purpose, are the same.

And this counsel of the Divine will is but one; it is not said counsels, but counsel; because there is no plurality of purposes with God. One purpose is all he has; and that one purpose embraces all things. It is the purpose which dwells now in the Divine mind, and has dwelt there from eternity, and will there remain to eternity, forever going forth in execution. “He is of one mind, and who can turn him?” He says, “I am the Lord, I change not.” From all eternity God is of one mind in relation to all things; and in his purpose he changes not; it is the same now as it ever has been. The counsel of his will has never changed from the beginning. As he himself saith, “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” And again it is said,

“The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever; the thoughts of his heart to all generations.” And hence, his counsel or purpose being one and unchangeable, it is the same from eternity. And consequently, he worketh all things according to his eternal purpose; they are as he from eternity purposed they should be.

And it may be remarked that if he works all things according to his purpose, then he must have purposed to work them so: if he had had no purpose in relation to all things, they could not have been worked according to his purpose. The working of them according to a purpose, necessarily implies the existence of a purpose. God, from the beginning, then, had a purpose or plan in relation to all things. And we have seen that his purpose is but one; there are no new purposes in the mind of the Deity; and hence, his purpose or plan according to which he worketh all things is an eternal plan. All that he does is in accordance with his eternal determination, or purpose, or decree. And from these remarks it is perfectly evident that this passage of Scripture does fully warrant us to believe that God hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

And it ought to be observed, that it is not *some* things, but *all* things which he worketh according to his purpose. Everything that occurs, then, is in accordance with his purpose; because everything which occurs, is a part of the *all things* designated here. And it thus appears that the Divine decree or foreordination extends to all that have been done, and all that ever will be done. It includes all the works of the Creator himself, and all the works of his creatures likewise. Whatever occurs throughout the vast universe of God, occurs in



strict accordance with the Divine decree. Not a single event ever transpires, but what was embraced in this decree. In the expressive language of Professor Eadie, "This Divine fore-resolve is universal in its sweep—'He worketh *all* things after the counsel of his own will.' The plan of the universe lies in the omniscient mind, and all events are in harmony with it. Power, in unison with infinite wisdom, and independent and undeviating purpose, is seen alike whether he create a seraph, or form a gnat—whether he fashion a world, or round a grain of sand—whether he prescribe the orbit of a planet, or the gyration of an atom. The extinction of a world, and the fall of a sparrow, are equally the result of a free pre-arrangement." And not only all that transpires in the material universe, but also the doings of all free intelligent beings, are embraced in this Divine foreordination. All actions having moral character—all right actions, and all wrong actions—all good actions, and all bad actions—all holy actions, and all sinful actions—are decreed from everlasting. Some would say that this is horrible; and some would pronounce it downright blasphemy, to say that God had decreed all sinful actions; because, in their opinion, this would make God the author of sin, and would represent him as having no preference for holiness. But we hope to make it evident, that though God has decreed sinful actions, yet his holiness is not impugned thereby; and that he is not the author of sin; and that the decree is not the cause of sin at all.

That sinful actions have been decreed, forms the principal objection against the doctrine of Divine foreordination. This is the great difficulty with the mass of mankind, and has led multitudes to reject the doctrine alto-

gether. If Divine foreordination embraced only such actions as are good, they might be led to receive it. But if we take the word of God for our guide, we cannot avoid the conclusion that evil actions have been foreordained. But before appealing to the testimony of Scripture, we shall offer a few thoughts suggested by reason itself relative to the matter.

It has already been shown that God conducts the affairs of the universe according to a fixed and settled plan. And inasmuch as the plan of the universe is decreed, all the affairs which enter into this plan must be decreed; but the sinful actions of men are a part of these affairs; and therefore the sinful actions of men must be decreed. The plan being decreed, all the parts are decreed, and sinful actions being a part, they must be decreed. Perhaps it may be said that evil actions are no part of the affairs of God's universe. And if they be not classed among the affairs of the universe of God, where else can they be classed? Is there any other universe with the affairs of which to class them? And as it is thus evident that they must be classed with the affairs of the universe, and these are all decreed, then it follows, that evil actions must themselves be decreed.

When God formed his plan, evil actions were either embraced in it or they were not. If they were not, then he formed his plan without any reference to them whatever; for if he had any reference to them in the formation of his plan, then they were embraced in it. But the supposition is that they were not embraced in it, and hence it was formed without any reference to them. But if the plan was formed without any reference to sinful actions, it must be executed without any reference to

these actions; and then it follows that God has nothing whatever to do with these actions: he neither controls, nor punishes, nor overrules them. But this we know to be contrary to fact; for he makes "the wrath of man to praise him; and he restraineth the remainder of his wrath;" and punishes his wicked deeds. And inasmuch as God actually has reference to the sinful actions of men in the execution of his plan, he must have had reference to them in its formation. For when the plan embraces them in its execution, it must embrace them in its formation; or else the plan which is executed is different from the one which was formed. But God does not form one plan and execute a different one; the one which he executes is the one which he formed. And as the one which he executes does really embrace evil actions, the one which he formed must have done the same. And the plan being a decreed plan, all embraced in it is decreed; and evil actions being embraced, they must be decreed. And so, view the matter as we may, it is found that evil actions are comprehended in the Divine foreordination; just because they constitute a part of the affairs of God's universe, all of which are embraced in a decreed plan.

But in proof of the foreordination of evil actions, we appeal to the testimony of Scripture. And let it be remembered, that whatever the Lord does, that he purposed to do; that is, whatever he does was decreed. Now, take the case of Joseph: by the wickedness of his brethren he was carried as a slave into Egypt. But the Bible informs us that God sent him. And he did not send him without purposing or decreeing to send him. And we know that this decree was executed by the inhuman

wickedness of Joseph's brethren. Here then is one case in which evil actions were decreed.

In Isaiah we find another striking case. Of the King of Assyria the Lord says, "I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down as the mire of the streets." Now, inasmuch as the Lord sent the King of Assyria against the people of Israel, he purposed to send him, that is, he decreed to send him to execute his wrath upon them. But the King of Assyria committed great wickedness in executing this decree. The king's design was a wicked design, and its execution was flagrant iniquity. The Lord says of the king, "Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few." It was not in his heart to punish the Jews for their sin against God, which was God's design in sending him; but it was "in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few." The desire of his heart was to slaughter, and spoil, and plunder the nations. And hence, the Lord says, that he will punish him for doing the very thing which he sent him to do:—"Wherefore it shall come to pass that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria; and the glory of his high looks." Here it was decreed that the King of Assyria should murder and plunder this people; but this was horrible wickedness. Here then is another plain case in which evil actions were foreordained.

Again, in relation to the Saviour we read thus:—"And truly the Son of Man goeth as it was determined; but

wo unto that man by whom he is betrayed." "The Son of Man goeth as it was determined," that is, as it was decreed. Arminians say that "as it was determined," does not mean as it was ordained, but only as it was foretold in prophecy. But how could it be foretold in prophecy unless it was a thing which would certainly come to pass? And how could it be a thing certain, unless God had fixed it so? The Spirit of God would not have foretold it unless the purpose of God had made it certain. And nothing can be certain except what is made so by the arrangement of the Divine Being. And hence, its being foretold implies its being foreordained. Who would ever suppose that the Spirit of God would foretell anything which had not been before appointed? All Scripture prophecy implies foreordination. Events could not be foretold as certain, unless they were fixed upon before the prophecy was given. God's making known that certain things *will* come to pass, implies that it was the purpose of God that they *shall* come to pass. If it were not his purpose that they *shall*, he would not say they *shall*. We are not now speaking of what God says will take place on certain conditions, as in the case of the men of Keilah giving up David, on the supposition that he would be with them when Saul would come in pursuit; but of events foretold in Scripture without reference to conditions. Of all such events it is obvious, that God would not say they shall come to pass if he had not first determined that they shall. And hence, it is manifest that everything foretold in Scripture prophecy must be foreordained. And the admission that anything has been foretold, is an admission that that thing has been decreed. And this is the proper meaning of the phrase, "as it was



determined." The word in the original signifies to bound, to make or set a boundary: and in the New Testament Scriptures, "to mark out definitely, that is to determine, to appoint, to constitute." "The Son of Man goeth," then, as it was determined, as it was appointed, as it was constituted, that is, as it was foreordained. But how did he actually go?—by being betrayed and murdered. And therefore it was determined or decreed that he should be betrayed and murdered. Another plain case in which evil actions were decreed.

In Revelations we read as follows: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." The will of God here spoken of is not his will "in relation to the destruction of this mighty power," (*Barnes*,) for the original will not at all admit of this signification; but it is his will that they should agree and give their kingdom unto the beast. God put it into their hearts to agree and to do this. And if God put it into their hearts to give their kingdom to the beast, he purposed, that is, he decreed to do this. But it was exceedingly wicked in these kings to give their power and the support of their kingdoms to the beast. What they did, however, was decreed, and hence we have another instance in which evil actions were foreordained.

The Apostle Peter tell us that Christ is "a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed." To what were they appointed? to

stumbling at the word, or to disobedience, or else to both. Now it is sinful to stumble at the word; it is taking offence at the gospel, so that it becomes a savor of death unto death. And to be disobedient is sinful. And evidently they were appointed to what is sinful. And what is meant here by being "appointed?" Does it mean that they were prophesied of in the Old Testament Scriptures, that they were there spoken of as those who would stumble and be disobedient? No, assuredly it does not mean this, because the verb *Tithemi* never has this signification. It never signifies to prophesy of any one, or to speak of any one in any way whatever. Such is not the signification of the word at all, and it cannot be its signification here. The word signifies "to lay, to set, to put, to place, to fix," etc. And the proper meaning is that "they were appointed." And even it could be made appear that what is meant is, that they were pointed out in prophecy as stumbling at the word, and being disobedient, such a prophecy would imply the foreordination of their doing so, as every thing foretold in prophecy must be foreordained; it must be fixed upon in the Divine purpose as what will come to pass, or else it would not be foretold. And as the obvious meaning of the passage is that they were appointed or foreordained to stumbling and disobedience, it is another clear case in which evil actions were decreed.

In the book of Acts we read as follows:—"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." Now these were gathered together to

put Jesus to death. But we are told that they were gathered together to do what God's hand and counsel had before determined to be done. And hence, their great iniquity in murdering the Son of God, was a thing fixed and foreordained in the Divine counsels. Dr. Clarke and others attempt to change the meaning of the passage by reading it thus: "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." And Dr. Clarke says: "It is not usually observed that there is a parenthesis here," and explains the passage as though there was. But the fact is, there is no parenthesis; and it would be strange if it was "usually observed" that there is, where there is none. But he attempts to make this change in the text, because it was the only method by which he could set aside the clear testimony of the passage in favor of Divine foreordination. Dr. Bloomfield was a decided Arminian, but he would not compromise his scholarship by such an exposition as Dr. Clarke's. He says: "The sense is, for the purpose of doing—what? why no other than what thy overruling power and predisposing wisdom pre-determined to be done." And says, also: "Here, as Bishop Jebb observes, the heathen, the peoples, the kings of the earth, and the rulers, (that is, all the rebellious personages of the second Psalm,) are brought forward, as fulfilling whatsoever it was pre-appointed they should do." Here is the testimony of both Dr. Bloomfield and Bishop Jebb in refutation of Dr. Clarke's interpretation. And when Arminians give a Calvinistic interpretation of a text, there is no room to doubt that their interpretation is correct; for it is evident that they give such an

interpretation just because it will admit of no other. And the passage undoubtedly proves very clearly that the crucifixion of Christ was foreordained, and is another in support of the foreordination of evil actions.

And again, the apostle speaking to the Jews concerning Christ, says, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." On the words "determinate counsel and foreknowledge," Dr. Bloomfield says, "The best commentators are agreed, that *orismene boule* means the determinate, and consequently, immutable counsel of God; and *prognosei* signifies *decree*; a signification common both to Hellenistic and Classical Greek." And accordingly, Christ was delivered up by the foreordination of God. He was delivered then to some end—either to live or die; it was to die—to be crucified and slain. The determinate counsel of God delivered him to death—it appointed his death—it decreed his death, and hence, decreed a wicked deed; because, "by wicked hands he was crucified and slain." This, then, is another unmistakeable passage in which we are told that wicked actions are decreed.

Now it is altogether needless to multiply passages of this kind, for these are amply sufficient to prove that it is not inconsistent with the character of God to foreordain evil actions; because he hath foreordained some such. But if he may foreordain some, then he may in like manner foreordain all evil actions. And if he may foreordain all evil actions, then he may foreordain all good actions; and so he may foreordain whatsoever comes to pass.

Many passages might be cited where it is taught that

good actions have been foreordained. For instance, the Apostle Peter says, "Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." These are addressed as elect; but the passage implies that they were elected to obedience; that is, they were elected or foreordained to obey; so that their obedience or good works were foreordained. There is a precious promise where the Lord says, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Now since the Lord causes them to walk in his statutes, and to keep his judgments, then he purposed to do so, that is, he decreed to do so. He decreed the keeping of his judgments, then, which is the doing of good. And these good actions are therefore foreordained. And it is written: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Here it is said that they were chosen, or elected, or foreordained to holiness and blamelessness; but this consists in being and doing good: and hence the foreordination of good actions. And again:—"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Here it is stated expressly that God hath before ordained good works; and there is no room to doubt that good actions have been foreordained.

Now when we find so many plain passages in the Bible teaching that actions both good and evil are foreordained, it certainly affords sufficient ground to conclude, that God for his own glory hath foreordained whatsoever



comes to pass. And there are multitudes of passages to the same purport; all implying that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Because, "Whatsoever pleased the Lord, that did he, in heaven and in earth; in the seas, and in all deep places.—The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.—I am the Lord, and there is none else; I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things—For I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. The Lord reigneth—I will work and who shall let it?—The counsel of the Lord that shall stand." Why the Bible is full of it, that the Lord does according to his pleasure—that nothing is done but in accordance with his purpose—that he has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Now the fact that we find in the Bible a multitude of passages asserting foreordination, and none denying it, ought to be conclusive. We can point to many passages where the doctrine is taught, but can find none where the doctrine is denied. All that is against it is the interpretations and objections of men. All passages which in any way hint at foreordination, affirm it; and not a single passage denies it. And the state of the controversy is just this: the declarations of the Bible are all on one side, and nothing but the interpretations and objections of men on the other. It is entirely impossible to find in the Bible a single passage pointing to foreordination and denying it, while multitudes are found all

affirming it; and these passages teach it clearly and plainly, without any forced interpretation; and so that it requires both learning and skill to turn them from this plain and obvious meaning. And the passages adduced in refutation of the doctrine, are generally such as have no reference to it whatever; but they are interpreted by men so as to make them speak against it. But in such cases it is not the text which speaks against the doctrine, it is only the interpretation of men. This fact ought to satisfy all reasonable men that the doctrine is taught in the Bible. Very many passages are found all affirming it, and not a single one denying it—the plain declarations of Scripture are all on one side, and nothing but the interpretations of men on the other—the case is a clear one where the truth lies.

Now when we find it so clearly revealed in the Bible that all things are foreordained, are we to deny it because it may be attended with difficulties? Shall we deny that it is so, because we do not fully understand *how* it is so? Is the doctrine of divine foreordination to be discarded because we do not fully understand it? True, this is one reason why many reject it, just because they cannot understand it. But we believe many doctrines which we do not understand; and we ought to believe this one too. We do not understand *how* the Spirit of God operates upon the heart of man in regeneration, and yet we believe that he does. We do not understand how the Divine and human natures are united in the person of the Lord Jesus, and yet we believe that there is such a union. We do not understand *how* there are three Persons in the ever-blessed Godhead, and yet we believe that there are. And so, although we may not be

able to comprehend the very profound doctrine of divine foreordination, yet we ought not to reject it. We may receive it as among the incomprehensibilities of an incomprehensible God. And with these remarks the subject might be dismissed; but this would not accord with the intention in entering upon the investigation; as the main design was to endeavor to clear it of some of the difficulties with which it is confessedly attended. And this shall be attempted, not by taking up and refuting the opposing arguments; nor yet by stating and setting aside all the objections that may be made; but simply by pursuing a plain course of explanation, which will of itself be a refutation of arguments, and an answer to objections.

## CHAPTER II.

It may be advisable before proceeding further, to direct attention to the very important truth, that the foreordination of all things does not in any way affect man's responsibility to God. His duty, and the ground of his duty, are the same as though there were no divine decrees. And one part of the divine purpose no doubt is, to address men, to require them to act, and even to deal with them, as though nothing had been decreed concerning them; this we know to be a part of the Divine plan, because men are actually addressed and dealt with in this manner; and whatever God does, constitutes a part of his plan; for he executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

And to deal with man on the ground of the divine decrees would be to deal with him on the ground of what does not concern him; for the decrees are not his, and it is not his province to be busied with them, that is, to make them his guide or rule of living. Man did not make the divine decrees, and they are not his rule. God made them, and he made them for himself, not for man. To man they do not belong; as a rule he has nothing to do with them, and he is dealt with accordingly; and hence, is dealt with as though there were no decrees; because in reality to him there are none, they belong

entirely to another, that is, God. The Book of the divine decrees is God's rule of procedure; but the Book of the divine law is man's rule of procedure. As it is written, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." The secret things, that is, the decrees belong to the Lord, but the things which are revealed, the Scriptures of truth, belong to us and to our children, that we may do all that they require. And hence, though all things are decreed, it is fitting and proper to deal with men as if it were not so, because with the decrees as a rule men have nothing to do whatever. God has given to men his Law, but his Plan he has reserved to himself. And the law of God addresses men just as it might do if there were no divine plan. This is so pointedly the case, that the divine law and the divine plan may seem in some things to be in conflict. For undoubtedly it must be admitted, that the law of God forbids many things which are embraced in the divine plan. It has already been shown, that man's apostasy from God, and all the wickedness resulting therefrom, were certainly embraced in the divine plan, but the law of God forbids all this evil. Nor is it derogatory to the Divine character, to suppose that he has formed a plan comprehending many things with which his own law is in conflict. Because the actually existing evil which his law forbids was certainly embraced in his plan; or else we must admit what would obviously be derogatory to the character of God, that is, to suppose that he acts without any plan, just at random; or if he did form a plan, that it was so imperfect and defective as not to



embrace the actual state of things as they now exist, and that God has to abandon that plan and adopt another, or manage matters as best he can in the new state of affairs which has arisen. Such a supposition as this would not remove the apparent difficulty. And it is better to view things as they are, and admit that the actually existing moral evil was comprehended in the divine plan from the beginning. For it involves nothing that is inconsistent with, or derogatory to the Divine character. It only implies that he purposed to create moral beings, amenable to the divine law, and to leave them to the freedom of their own will, in the exercise of which he would suffer them to transgress and practise the very things which his law has forbidden. But God is not the author of the evil embraced in his own plan; it originates with his creatures. Their agency is the sole cause of all that is evil; but they, and their agency, and all its results, are embraced in his plan. And that all these should be embraced in his plan, is in no way inconsistent with the holy and righteous character of God. And then, the plan is his own, and man need give himself no anxiety about its suitableness. Man will never be called to account for any defect or impropriety in God's plan; and, therefore, man ought to leave it to the Lord, believing that it is what it ought to be. And even if he be not able to perceive the propriety and excellence of the plan, in all respects, yet ought he not to object or find fault, because it is none of his concern; it is wholly the Lord's; and he ought not to meddle with and take exception to what belongs to God and none else. Yet man is so meddlesome that he would interfere even in matters with which God alone has anything to

do. But man's place is to be busied with the divine law, for God has given it to him for that purpose, while he claims for himself the prerogative of being engaged with the divine plan.

But it is beyond all controversy, that men are addressed in the Bible as though their future character and destiny were altogether uncertain; just in the same way as if nothing had been foreordained in relation to them. And this dealing with men as though nothing had been foreordained is in harmony with their character as free, moral beings, responsible for their conduct, and shaping their destiny by their own voluntary doings; so that each man receives at last according to what he hath done, and not according to what was decreed in relation to him; that is, his own conduct is the ground or reason of the award which he receives, and not the decree of God. This is the obvious meaning of Bible testimony even from the first announcement of man's accountability, down to the recorded decisions of the last judgment—"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Both these passages, the one at the beginning and the other at the end of the Word of God, teach most plainly, that man is dealt with according to his doings; that his deserts are the reasons of his final reward, and not the divine decrees. He receives his reward because he has done something on account of which he is viewed as en-

titled to it, and not merely because it was decreed to him. It is true the reward was decreed to him, yet the decree was not the procuring cause of it, but his own conduct. It was decreed that in the day of Adam's eating the forbidden fruit he should surely die, but the decree was not the cause of his dying, the cause was his own disobedience. It was his own conduct which brought the evil upon him, and not the decree; if he had not disobeyed, he never would have suffered in consequence of any decree. God dealt with him just as though nothing had been decreed concerning him; and solely on the ground of his own voluntary conduct. Many passages might be cited from the Word of God, which teach that man is dealt with on the ground of his free agency and moral responsibility, and that he receives his reward on account of his own voluntary conduct, and not on account of any foreordination in relation to him. For example:—"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." Again, "And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments; then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel. But if ye turn away and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods and worship them; then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and

will make it to be a proverb and a by-word among all nations.”—“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil which I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build, and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.” And thus it is evident that men are addressed in Scripture as though it were uncertain, even with God, how they shall act in the future. How often does God say in his Word to men that if they will do so and so, such and such will follow, but if they will do otherwise, then the result will be different; apparently as though God did not know which course they would pursue. But God being omniscient, it is absolutely certain that he knows infallibly how each individual will act in every given case. Men are addressed as though it were uncertain how they will act, and yet there is no uncertainty with God, but there is uncertainty with man. With God the matter is fixed and unchangeable; but with man it is not so; with him it is unknown and uncertain, and he is viewed and treated accordingly. With him it is uncertain how he shall act in the future, and he is addressed accordingly, and left to shape his conduct according to his own choice; because his own choice is the immediate cause of all that conduct for which he is accountable.

And this is the Divine purpose and arrangement, to address men and to deal with men just as though nothing



had been foreordained in relation to either their conduct or their destiny, while in reality both are unchangeably fixed by the divine decree. But we are apt to say, how can these things be? How can it be that all things are already fixed in relation to a man, and yet he is addressed and dealt with as though it were not so? Can this be possible? Many indeed consider it as impossible, and therefore have denied the doctrine of divine foreordination. From the Word of God it is quite manifest that men are addressed and dealt with as though nothing had been decreed concerning them, and hence many have taken the position that in truth, concerning them nothing has been decreed. That men are free agents, and that their destiny results from their own conduct, are clearly taught in Scripture; and this is supposed to imply that their conduct and destiny are not already fixed in the divine purpose. But is it not possible for God to decree all things, and yet leave men to act freely in all they do, and leave them responsible too for all they do? Is not this in reality what the Scriptures teach in relation to this matter? While they teach that men act freely, and are thus responsible, they teach as plainly that God has his purpose and plan, and that his purpose and plan embrace all things, and are fulfilled in all that come to pass. These two things are clearly taught in the Word of God, and when they are taught there, it is our place to receive them, whether we can understand how it can be so or not. It would be unreasonable in us to reject whatever is beyond our comprehension. Were we to do so, we ought to refuse belief in the existence of God, because the nature of his existence is infinitely above our comprehension. Of the mode of the Divine

existence—a Trinity in Unity—we can form no conception. Nor can we understand the nature of the union between the Divine and human natures in the person of the Redeemer. Nor do we understand the nature of the union existing between our own soul and body. We do not even know how a blade of grass grows. The blooming of a flower and the blowing of the wind are beyond our comprehension. And, surely, it is not becoming in us to refuse belief in any thing contained in the Word of God, because we cannot see and understand how it can be. When the Scriptures tell us that God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” and that man acts freely and is accountable for all he does, we ought to believe both, whether we can understand how it is so or not. We may admit that no man has that ability which would enable him to appoint all the actions of another man and secure their performance, and leave the other man to act freely and be responsible. But though man could not do this, are we to suppose that God could not do it? Such a supposition would imply that we are on an equality with God. And shall we dare to conceive thus of the Almighty? and measure his infinity by our own weakness? Do not all concur that it is the province of the Divine Majesty, with ease to accomplish that for which man has no strength? And to him it belongs, in the exercise of his infinite wisdom and power, to arrange and execute all things in such a manner that only what he has purposed shall be performed by men, and that they shall do it freely, and from choice, in the exercise of their accountability to God. Shall we deny to the self-existent, independent Jehovah such power as this, because man is destitute of it? Would not this be

impious folly? To admit that God can thus arrange and manage his affairs is only admitting what is set forth in the Scriptures, and it is conceiving of God in a far more exalted and worthy manner than if it were denied. To suppose that God was not capable of arranging all things in such a manner as that man should act freely, and be responsible for what he does, while God decreed all things that come to pass, would be quite derogatory to the Divine character; it would be a groveling conception of God, utterly unworthy of the boundless infinitude of the Divine Nature. That God can have his plan embracing all things, and also have man free and responsible, is the only adequate conception of that incomprehensible greatness which belongs to the one living and true God: "For his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out." Such a thing may be impossible with man, but not impossible with God. And we can readily conceive that the Divine arrangement does not at all interfere with man's freedom and accountability. No man knows what the arrangement is in relation to himself, and hence he cannot in any way be influenced by any knowledge thereof. Nor is he influenced in any thing he does by any such consideration. Though a man's actions are decreed, yet he never does them because they have been decreed, but simply because they are agreeable to his nature; his own choice is always the cause of his free actions, whether his actions have been decreed or not.

The design at present, however, is not to explain how man is free and responsible, though all things are fore-ordained, but to direct attention to the fact that such is the case, whether it can be explained or not. And un-

doubtedly God's government over man is a *moral* government; it addresses man as a free agent, capable of being influenced by motives. It sets before him rewards and punishments, to induce him to obedience, and restrain him from disobedience. And man is rewarded for his obedience, and punished for his disobedience; and hence, it is necessary that he should be left to act freely according to his own choice, or it would not be just to punish or reward him for what he does. And it is a very important truth, which ought to be deeply impressed on every mind, that the Divine arrangement is to reward every man as his work shall be; and that sentence will be pronounced on each at last in view of each one's conduct, whether it has been good or bad. There is nothing more clearly taught in Scripture, than that man's own conduct is the ground of the Divine procedure in the final distribution of both punishments and rewards. The wicked shall be punished in view of their wickedness; and the righteous shall be rewarded in view of their righteousness. Though the righteous have been chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world," and are "saved by grace," without any merit of their own, yet the reward is bestowed on them at last on the ground of what they have done, and not on the ground of their having been ordained to everlasting life. Saving grace is bestowed upon them, *not* on the ground of any excellence or worthiness being in them; but heaven is given to them on the ground of the righteousness and worthiness, which that grace has bestowed upon them and wrought in them. Grace is not the reward of anything they have done, or will do; but heaven is given to them as a reward for what they have done: "Come ye blessed



of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was a hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in." But the reward bestowed upon the righteous on the ground of their goodness, is altogether a reward of grace. Though heaven is bestowed upon them as a reward, yet they do not merit heaven. It is a reward promised and given for a very imperfect service, which on the score of *justice* could merit nothing; but God graciously rewards it because, though imperfect, it proceeds from an honest and loving heart. It is a *gracious* reward too, because it is the reward of a gracious work. Grace works in a good man all that goodness for which he receives a reward, and hence, the reward is a reward of grace. "The gift of God is eternal life;" but though it is a "gift," it is a reward for obedience; and being a *gift*, it must be a reward of *grace*. He receives the reward, however, on account of his goodness, and not on account of his being elected or foreordained to everlasting life. The question put to the righteous at the day of judgment will not be, "Were you decreed to be saved? were you elected to salvation? did God give you his saving grace?" but it will be, "Did you obey the Lord your Maker? Did you repent and believe, and endeavor to live a godly life?" The trial will not be concerning the Divine arrangement; but it will be concerning human conduct. It will not be a trial in relation to what God has done, but in relation to what man has done. No man will be asked: "Did God decree you to life, or did he decree you to death? Did he grant you his saving grace, or did he withhold it

from you?" but each will be asked, "Did *you* sincerely endeavor to do your duty to your God?"

And so in relation to the wicked; they will not be tried nor condemned on account of anything which has been decreed or not decreed; or anything God has done or not done: they will be tried as to their own conduct, and condemned for what they have done, and have not done. Though it is decreed that the wicked shall perish for their sins, and though their sins are decreed also, yet the decree is not the cause of their sin, and will not be the cause of their perdition; they themselves are the cause of both. But if their wickedness be decreed, is not the decree the cause of their wickedness? By no means; their own evil disposition is the cause; they are wicked from free choice: the decree neither seduces them, nor coerces them, their wickedness is their own chosen way. And every wicked man is conscious of it, that he acts freely, without compulsion, and might act differently, if he only chose to do so. And hence, he is justly condemned for his wickedness, when it is voluntary on his part, and committed from choice, and he so free from all compulsion, that he might have pursued the directly opposite course, if such had been his own pleasure.

And whether all things have been foreordained or not, and whether men believe this doctrine or not, one thing is certain, and it ought to be lastingly impressed on every man's heart, and it is, that every man will be finally judged according to the character, which at last he shall be found to have in the sight of God. No man will be asked at the bar of God whether he was decreed to perdition or to salvation. And no plea founded on foreor-

dination will be offered there in extenuation of man's guilt. No man will ever plead there that he did evil because all things were foreordained, for he would know that he was stating a falsehood in the presence of his Omniscient Judge; as every man is conscious that he never does anything for the reason that it has been decreed, but simply because he loves to do it. Wicked men, to excuse their impiety, sometimes say that they need not try to reform, for all things have been decreed and they cannot do differently, while at the same time they are conscious that what they do is the result of their own choice; and that they might do differently, and that they never do anything for the reason that it had been decreed. They live in disobedience to God, because they love their evil ways, and not at all from any desire to fulfil the divine purpose. Such men, instead of endeavoring to obey that purpose would much rather disobey it, if they only knew what it was; their aversion to God would lead them to thwart his purpose if they could. To do the will of God in any sense, is not the motive with them in a single action; and yet they say they act so because it has been decreed, though they are conscious that their assertion is utterly false; and the universal consciousness of man declares it false; and the entire testimony of God's Word proclaims it false; for every man feels that he never does anything for the reason that it has been decreed, and the Scriptures everywhere affirm the same. And all men who make such statements know at the time, that they are false; and all other men know the same. To such a degree of impiety does the wickedness of the wicked lead them, that they will attempt to justify their sin, and throw the blame of it upon God, by asserting

what they know to be utterly untrue, and what all others know to be untrue; for they know themselves, and all others know, that to comply with the divine purpose never was the motive with any wicked man; and that the cause of his evil actions are the promptings of his own evil nature; and that he might forbear to do evil if he only chose.

But were such men to take the Word of God for their guide, how different would be their views in relation to these matters! and how differently they would talk and feel in view of their appearing at the bar of God! They would learn that when they stand there, it is not *God* who is to be tried, but *man*. The investigation will not be as to what God has decreed or not decreed in relation to a wicked man, but as to what the man has himself done. And his destiny will there hinge upon the question, whether he has endeavored to obey God or not. If a man has taken the revealed will of God for his guide, and endeavored to obey it, he will be saved; but if he has refused to take the revealed will of God as his guide, and refused to obey it, he will perish. His eternal destiny will be the consequence of his own conduct—if obedience it will be life, if disobedience it will be death. Not God's decrees, but man's character, will be the basis of decision at the last judgment.—“So then every one of us shall give account of himself unto God:” “Who will render to every man according to his deeds. To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that

doeth evil." "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Were it not the Divine arrangement to deal with men according as they obey or disobey him, the very end of the arrangement itself would be defeated; because the grand and ultimate end of that arrangement is the manifestation of the Divine character, and especially the moral attributes thereof. But how could the moral attributes of God be revealed in the administration of a moral government among men, if men are not dealt with according as they are moral or immoral, that is, obedient or disobedient to the will of God? The Divine administration is not controlled by fate or destiny, but is regulated by the principles of moral rectitude. The *right* and the *wrong*, and the consequences of the *right* and the *wrong*, run through the whole of the Divine administration. And he hath arranged all things in such a manner as to demonstrate to his creation that he loves righteousness and hates its opposite. He commands righteousness and forbids its opposite. He rewards righteousness and punishes its opposite. And he has so constituted man that he distinguishes between what is morally right, and what is morally wrong; and that he approves of what he esteems right, and disapproves of what he esteems wrong. And hence, everywhere among men we find the play of moral sentiments and moral feelings—men "everywhere among themselves accusing or else excusing one another," approving or condemning each other's conduct; and a universal feeling prevailing that men ought to deal with each other on the principles



of moral equity and justice; and that evil doing ought to be punished, and that good doing is entitled to a reward. The idea of reward and punishment for good and evil pervades the entire structure of human affairs. And however men may disregard the right and do the wrong, yet, the universal feeling is that the right is right, and ought to be, and that the wrong is wrong and ought not to be; and that the wrong ought to be punished, and the right have a reward. And thus the moral nature of God is written upon the very constitution of man, and is manifested in man's intercourse with man, and in the whole structure and workings of human affairs, throughout the entire race. And thus the lesson is everywhere written and designed to be impressed, that man is to be dealt with according to his doings—that he is a free, moral being, shaping his destiny by his own deeds—and that the great Moral Ruler of the universe will deal with him at last as his work shall be, “whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” And the conclusion of the whole matter is, that in order to enjoy the favor of God, he must be obeyed, if not perfectly, at least sincerely; and they that refuse to obey God, shall be punished for their disobedience, no matter what has, or has not been decreed. Man's own doings draw after them his doom in eternity. And only this is consistent with his character as a free, moral being; and consistent with the moral character of the Divine administration, in the dispensing of which, God will give to every man as his work shall be.

The Divine arrangement most manifestly is, that man must seek for, and labor for, those blessings which have been allotted to him in the Divine purpose. If it is or-

dained that a man shall be pardoned, it is also ordained that he shall ask for pardon, and seek for it in God's appointed way, as far as he may have opportunity. When it is ordained that a man shall reap a plentiful harvest, it is also ordained that he shall use the means for doing so—till the ground, and sow the seed; and the decreed crop is given to him too, as the reward of his labors. The employment of means for the accomplishment of ends, is a very conspicuous feature of the Divine arrangement, that is, as far as his creatures are concerned. God may accomplish ends without the use of means, but this prerogative he reserves to himself. For man he has ordained, that what he effects shall be by the use of means. And man can accomplish nothing in any other way. This is the unalterable law of the Divine arrangement in relation to man. And hence, whatever man desires to obtain, he must employ the ordained means to secure it. The means and the end are bound together for man by the divine decree, and they can never be separated; the one cannot be without the other; and wherever the one is, there also is the other. In every case of a man's obtaining salvation, he has used the means of salvation, as far as circumstances would admit; and in every case where the means have been used, agreeably to Divine appointment, salvation has been secured. And the foreordination of the means is specially manifest in the Divine arrangement. Many Scriptures might be quoted where it is implied that the means are specially ordained; but the frequency of the command for the use of the means, is sufficient evidence that they have been especially ordained. The means have a prominent place in the Word of God, and in all the affairs

of men, and that they have been especially decreed, is therefore a legitimate conclusion.

All the busy pursuits in the complicated affairs of the human family are nothing but the application of means, for the purpose of securing desired ends. And this industrious application of means is the divinely established order, in which man is to seek and secure his happiness. And since all desired ends are by Divine appointment connected with means, the necessity of using means is apparent at once. If men would secure any good, they must seek for it, work for it, labor for it; because whatever good is allotted to them by the Divine decree, is to be obtained by them through that diligence and effort, which the decree has made indispensable to the attainment of the allotted good. The decreed conditions must be complied with, before the good which is connected with them can be enjoyed. And hence, the Divine decree, instead of making useless all effort on the part of man, makes effort absolutely essential, in order to the obtaining of any favor from the hand of God; because God has decreed that his favors are to be obtained in this way. And hence, diligence, activity, labor, effort, perseverance, are required of men, in order that they may obtain the blessings allotted to them by the unchangeable purpose of God.

Now some will suppose that the views advanced in this chapter are in conflict with those of the preceding. To maintain that all things have been foreordained, and that man is responsible for what he does, and will be judged at last in view of his conduct, they think to be the sheerest contradiction. And hence, in relation to a Calvinist, the remark is often heard, that he is preaching

against himself, when he preaches man's accountability, and the necessity of obeying God in order to be saved. When a Calvinist preaches the doctrine of man's freedom and accountability, it is taken for granted that he is preaching against the doctrine of Divine foreordination, just as though the one doctrine was necessarily subversive of the other, and the preacher of course contradicting himself. But on the same grounds the Bible itself might be charged with self-contradiction, because it plainly teaches both these doctrines—the foreordination of all things on the part of God, freedom and accountability, and the necessity of effort in order to be saved, on the part of man. And the Calvinist, in preaching both, only preaches what he finds in the Bible, and without any apprehension that the one is in contradiction of the other. He finds them both taught in the Word of God, and he considers it his duty to teach both, whether they may have the appearance of conflicting with each other or not. If there should be any seeming conflict, he leaves this to the Author of the Bible, to God himself, believing that, God being the Author of both doctrines, they cannot be contradictory, though man may not be able to see altogether how they harmonize. But the Arminian, because he imagines that these doctrines are in conflict, embraces the one and discards the other: he discards Divine foreordination because he thinks this doctrine would destroy man's freedom and accountability, and make God the author of evil. The Calvinist, however, embraces both doctrines, because they are clearly revealed in the Word of God. And he does not "shun to declare the whole counsel of God," while the Arminian holds and preaches only the one half, and rejects

and tries to explain away the other half. "The whole counsel of God," as revealed in his Word, undoubtedly embraces these things—the foreordination of all things, God's entire freedom from all complicity with sin, and also man's free agency and accountability for the whole of his voluntary conduct. And the Calvinist holds and preaches all this. He receives "the whole counsel of God," just as he finds it contained in God's Word. He does not reject any part of it, nor try to explain away any part of it. He holds both and maintains both, and hence the Arminian thinks he must be contradicting himself. Then the course of the Arminian is altogether different. He holds the one part of the counsel of God, and only the one; hence, he does not preach the two doctrines, which, in his opinion, are contradictory. But though he receives only the one part of the divine counsel, this does not free him from difficulty any more than the Calvinist; for he has far more trouble in explaining away that part of the divine counsel, which he rejects than the Calvinist has in receiving it entire. It is certainly easier and pleasanter, to receive and hold these doctrines as taught in the Scriptures, than to reject some of them, and then have to twist and torture the Word of God, in order to root them out of the divine record. For it is an evident fact, that the main business of Arminians with this part of the divine counsel, which they find taught in the Bible, is to explain it away. All their learning and skill in criticism, are put forth in attempts to explain away the obvious common-sense meaning of all such passages. Any impartial observer, who examines the writings of Arminian commentators and controversialists, cannot but admit that such is the case.



And it undoubtedly makes more trouble for the Arminian to explain away these passages, and reconcile his system with the Word of God, than for the Calvinist to receive these doctrines, though he may not be able altogether to see their consistency, or in all points fully to reconcile them with each other. And we shall now proceed to an examination of these difficulties. And in connection with this subject they are confessedly great. But by a candid and careful investigation it may be found that the alleged contrarieties are only apparent, and that all parts of the divine counsel are in perfect agreement—God infinitely holy, and man entirely free.

## CHAPTER III.

THE great difficulty connected with the doctrine of the Divine decrees is, to reconcile the foreordination of all things with man's freedom, and God's holiness—to show that though a man's actions are all decreed, yet he acts freely, and is accountable for all he does: and to show, that God is not the author, nor the decree the cause of the evil, which has been foreordained. The thought is apt to occur, that if a man's actions are all decreed, then he has no choice as to what he shall do—the decreed actions he must perform, and his liberty is thus taken away; and hence, not being free to act according to his own choice, he cannot be responsible for what he does. And the thought is apt to occur, that if God has foreordained evil, then he is not opposed to evil—and if he appoints it, and brings it to pass, then, he must be the origin or author of it—if he decrees evil, and executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence, he must be the author of the evil thus decreed and carried into execution. This is the nature of the difficulties connected with this subject; and they are apt to arise in every mind.

In order to relieve the subject of these difficulties some take the view that, not only moral evil, but all *evil actions* have been decreed permissively. According to this

view, God did not decree the evil actions of men, he only decreed to permit them. And there is quite a difference between decreeing a thing, and decreeing to permit it—to foreordain whatsoever comes to pass, is very different from foreordaining to permit whatsoever comes to pass. They are so different indeed, that the one is not the other, and they ought not to be confounded together. To purpose to permit a thing to come to pass, is to purpose to not prevent it, to not hinder it; and there is a great difference between purposing to not hinder a certain thing, and purposing that it shall be. I might purpose to not hinder the wind to blow; would not this be very different from purposing that the wind shall blow? And if I only purpose to let the wind blow, I am then not implicated in any way in the blowing of the wind. And so, if God only decreed to let evil actions occur, then he is not in any way implicated in their occurrence, if he only foreordained to not hinder them, then he is not the author of them. But though it may thus appear that God is not the author of the evil which he only decreed to permit, yet another difficulty still remains, which is, that he is *not opposed* to evil, because he decreed *to permit* it. If he could have refrained from decreeing to permit evil, and yet did decree to permit it, how can he be opposed to it? And surely he could have refrained, had it seemed good in his sight. If then, to *decree* evil, would imply that God is not opposed to it, so to decree *to permit* evil, would imply the same. And the theory of permissive decrees does not relieve the subject of this difficulty.

And much less does it relieve the subject of the difficulty, that by the foreordination of all things, man's lib-

erty is taken away, and no choice left to him as to what he shall do and be. Because actions that are decreed permissively, are as much fixed, certain, and unavoidable as those that are positively decreed.

The divine plan of the universe is one whole—it is a unit consisting of many parts. And if the plan, *as a whole*, be positively decreed, unchangeably fixed, as what shall come to pass, then each of its parts are decreed in the same way. If a man decreed that his orchard shall have just one hundred apple trees; and he knows that twenty of these one hundred will be bad, but he decrees to permit the twenty bad ones; then he has fixed upon one hundred trees, of which eighty are good and twenty are bad. And these he has decided shall be the one hundred in his orchard. His chosen hundred, then, is partly good and partly bad. But he has decreed that these shall be in his orchard. And when he has decreed that the *whole* shall consist of these two classes, is not the one class as certainly decreed as the other? The *whole*, consisting of the two classes, being decreed, the one class is as much decreed as the other; and each individual tree of each class is alike decreed, and each one as positively decreed as any other. And the bad are as unchangeably there as the good. And so with the divine plan; if the whole is a fixed, settled plan, in all its parts, then there can be no uncertainty in any of its parts; every part and every action is as unchangeably fixed as any other. And the evil actions of men being a part of the decreed plan, they must be as certainly fixed and unavoidable, as any other part of the plan. And thus, though the evil actions of men are said to be decreed permissively, they are positively fixed and certain; these

actions they must perform; and their liberty is thus taken away. And it is thus evident that the theory will not avail to relieve the subject of this difficulty; because these actions are a part of *one whole*, which is absolutely and unchangeably decreed.

Suppose I determine or decree to have a chain of forty links, and I decree *to permit* ten of them to be defective, I have then decreed to have a chain consisting of thirty good links and ten bad ones. When this is the kind of chain I have decreed, and the chain which is decreed, are not the bad links just as positively decreed as the good? I may say that the bad ones are permitted, but they are appointed, and constitute a part of the chain, just as certainly and as positively as the good ones; and just because I decreed the existence of a chain of which they were to form a part. It is obvious that the whole chain, by a positive decree, being constituted of these parts, each part must be alike positively decreed. And inasmuch as the divine arrangement or plan as a whole, is a decreed and fixed arrangement, each one of its parts must be alike fixed and decreed; and evil actions being a part of this positively decreed plan, they must be as positively decreed as any other part—the *whole* being decreed positively, *each of its parts* must be the same. And the actions of men being a part of this plan, they are thus decreed; hence, they can perform no other actions than these, there is no room for choice, and their liberty is taken away. And the evil actions of men being thus decreed, they cannot avoid the doing of them, and how can they be to blame? It is manifest that this theory of decrees of permission leaves the subject involved in these difficulties; and does



not at all explain how it can be, that all things are fore-ordained, and yet men act freely, and might act otherwise than they do if they chose.

If the theory of permissive decrees will really answer the end for which it has been adopted, it would be very desirable to have it made so to appear. It is hoped that some of those who embrace it, and are satisfied with it, will fully unfold the theory, and explain in a satisfactory manner how it removes the difficulties with which the doctrine of divine foreordination is beset; because there are many reasons for concurring in the opinion of the excellent Commentator Haldane, and others, that the theory of permissive decrees does not at all remove the difficulties which hang around the subject. And we agree with Haldane that it should not be expected to fathom the profound depths of the divine purpose; or understand the inscrutable mysteries of Him whose "judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out." But we also believe that much useful light may be shed upon the subject, and that many difficulties may be taken out of the way, and that clearer and more satisfactory views, and a better understanding of the subject in many respects may be had, than are already entertained by many. And as we do not feel competent to attempt the removal of difficulties by the application of the theory of permissive decrees, we are obliged to pursue a different course.

And even if it should be maintained that all actions are alike positively decreed, it would by no means follow that God has the same agency in the performance of all actions, both good and evil. Because every action proceeds directly from the disposition of the free agent. The evil disposition of the agent or actor is the immediate cause

of the evil action; and the good disposition of the agent is the immediate cause of the good action. The evil disposition is from the agent himself, but the good disposition is from God. Both actions are alike decreed, but the immediate cause of the good action is from God, whereas, the immediate cause of the evil action is from the agent himself. And there is this difference also, that the cause of the good action has been decreed, but the cause of the evil action has not been decreed. This we hope to make apparent in the sequel. And thus though the theory of permissive decrees be not adopted, it is not intended to teach, that God exercises the same agency in executing all that he has decreed.

In order to understand *how* it is, that all things are foreordained, and yet the decree not the cause of evil nor man's liberty infringed, it will be necessary carefully to distinguish between things that are different. And that to which attention is specially called at present is, the difference between *cause* and *occasion*. The *cause* is what produces the effect; and the *occasion* is that which calls the *cause* into operation, and is the *circumstances* bearing upon the *cause* at the time. Hence, it often happens that what is only the *occasion* of an occurrence is considered as the *cause*. For instance, it is said that Christianity has been the *cause* of a vast amount of evil in the world. The wrangling and contention, persecution and slaughter, which have occurred on account of this religion, have all been ascribed to it as the *cause*; whereas, religion has not been the *cause* at all: the depravity of man is the *cause*, and religion is only the *occasion*, affording the *cause* an opportunity of producing its legitimate effect. In one sense religion is the cause, that is,

the *incidental* cause, while man's depravity is the *moving* or *efficient* cause. But the *incidental* cause of anything is only the *occasion* which wakes up, and draws out the efficient cause into operation, and thus affords to it an opportunity of producing that effect, which nothing but itself can produce. Now, the incidental cause may be harmless, it may be even good, while it is the occasion of much evil. The religion of Christ is the greatest blessing the world enjoys, and yet it is the incidental cause, or occasion of unspeakable wickedness and evil. But the religion of Christ bears none of the blame. It is the want of this religion which is the efficient cause of all that evil of which religion is only the innocent occasion. And so the Word of God is the *occasion* of much wickedness; but man's depravity is the only *cause*. And in like manner the Lord's day, which is the Christian Sabbath, is the innocent *occasion* of a vast amount of iniquity, while the *cause* of this iniquity is only in man himself. The Christian Sabbath affords to man a special opportunity of manifesting his contempt for God's authority, and thus, in the circumstances, the depravity of his nature is called forth to produce its legitimate effect—disobedience to God in the desecration of the Lord's Day.

There is obviously, then, a clear and undoubted difference between the *cause* and the *occasion* of anything. This is no fanciful distinction which we make, but one well founded in fact. And it is just as certain that the *occasion* of an evil occurrence may be entirely free from all blame, though it affords to an evil *cause* an opportunity of producing its own evil effect. And with these plain and simple positions, which cannot be denied, we hope to be able to show, that the foreordination of sinful

actions, is only the cause or origin of the *innocent occasion* of these actions; while the evil which is in man is entirely the cause. The *occasion* of the action may be traced to the decree; but the *cause* of the action cannot be traced to the decree, but to the evil which is in the agent himself.

And in the next place, all living beings are acting beings. Because they are living beings, they are capable of acting; but they might be capable of acting and yet not act. Life itself is not the cause of their acting: there is something in them which sends forth their life into action; and this is nothing else than the nature or disposition which is in them. Their nature carries them forward to do what they do, either in thought or deed. There cannot possibly be any other cause of the voluntary actions of living beings than the nature or disposition which is in them. The cause of what they do from free choice must be in themselves. And, therefore, every living being has the immediate cause of its own actions within itself. And that cause is the nature or disposition which belongs to it. Irrational beings act from the instinct of their nature. There is great diversity in their actions, and this results from diversity of nature or instinct. Their doings are different, inasmuch as the cause of their doings is different, which is each one's own nature. The nature of each is just the immediate cause of what it does. And to all irrational creatures their nature is their law. To follow their own inclination is what they ought to do; and hence they never do wrong, that is, anything sinful. The Creator has not given to them a moral nature, and, therefore, they are not capable of perceiving anything of the nature of morality. They

cannot distinguish nor have any consciousness of what is morally right or morally wrong. And hence, they cannot be the subjects of moral law. And their nature being their law, they may freely and fully gratify all its desires and still be without crime. But their inclination to gratify the desires of their nature, is the cause of all that they voluntarily do.

And so with man; the immediate cause of all his actions is in himself, and that cause is the workings of his own complex nature. In this respect he is just like irrational beings; the promptings of his own nature is the cause of all his voluntary actions. But in other respects he is very unlike irrational beings. They have physical, and some measure of mental faculties, constituting their animal nature; but man has, in addition to these, a moral department of nature. And this moral nature makes him conscious of a difference between what is morally right and morally wrong; and conscious too, of accountability to some power higher than himself. He feels there are certain things which he ought to do, and certain other things which he ought not to do; and this obligation which he feels binding him, he refers to some authority higher than human. It is not in consequence of man's authority, that he feels he ought to do right and refrain from doing wrong; for he would have this feeling if there were no man upon the earth but himself. And this shows that he feels bound by some authority higher than that of man. And hence, he is conscious of accountability to some other Being or beings, and apprehensive of a future retribution in another state of existence.

Now, when man has a nature of this kind, it is evident



he ought not to disregard its instructions and warnings; he ought to be ruled and guided by its teachings. To irrational beings their animal nature, or the desires of their animal nature, are their guide or rule of conduct. But man's physical and mental faculties, that is, his physico-mental nature, is not his rule of conduct. If he had no other nature, it would; but having a moral nature which constitutes him a moral being, that nature is his rule. The fact that he is a moral being teaches that his moral nature must be his rule of action. A physico-mental nature would not be a fit rule for a moral being. Or in other words: the desires awakened by the workings of the physical and mental faculties of man would not be a fit rule or guide for the conduct of a moral being. Though man's physico-mental or rational nature is far superior to the animal nature of the lower orders of creation, yet it is especially his moral nature, which raises him to the high position, in the scale of being, which he occupies; for it is this which renders him capable of sharing in the crowning excellence of his Creator, and makes him a partaker of his blessedness. *Holiness* is the crowning excellence of the Divine Being, and that which renders him infinitely, uninterruptedly, and endlessly happy; and it is man's moral nature which makes him capable of sharing in this excellence with his Maker. And it follows, that man's moral nature must be far superior to his physico-mental or rational nature. And hence, his rational nature should always be in subordination to his moral nature. His moral nature should always rule him, whatever may be the inclinations of his rational nature. He ought ever to obey the voice of conscience, however contrary may be his natural desires.

"The desires of the flesh and of the mind" should always yield to the dictates of his moral nature; for it is "the work of the law, written by the Creator in the hearts of men," for their good. But all that man does, is done either in compliance with the desires of his rational nature, or in obedience to the dictates of his moral nature. Either the desires awakened by the workings of his physico-mental nature, or the desires awakened by the workings of his conscience, are the cause of all his voluntary doings. So that all he does has the immediate cause of it in himself. And man is a free agent, and acts from choice; he may either follow the inclinations of his rational nature, or he may obey the voice of his conscience, whichever he thinks more desirable. And in doing either, he still feels that the cause of his actions is in himself, and that, therefore, he is responsible for what he does.

And so, too, if we raise our thoughts to the ever-blessed God, and venture to speak of the cause of his procedure, we find that the cause of all he does is in himself. His doings are the out-going of his own all-perfect nature. "For he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And his own infinitely excellent nature being the cause of all he does, all his acts must be infinitely wise, holy, just, and good.

And thus we see there is no exception, in relation to all it is true, that the immediate cause of the actions of every living being is in itself. What it does, either in thought or deed, is only the outgoing of its own nature. And when it acts freely, it is impossible for its actions to have any other cause.

Now, bearing in mind these two plain and simple

truths, namely, that *cause* and *occasion* are different, and that the cause of the actions of all living beings is in themselves, we may proceed with the explanation. And none can have cause to complain that the subject is cumbered and obscured by a multitude of metaphysical abstractions, or new and unusual definitions. The positions are so obvious that argument is unnecessary to secure their admission; the mere statement of them is all that is required.

In order, then, to see how it is possible to have decreed actions performed without the decree infringing the freedom of the agent, let us suppose a case for the sake of illustration. A father has two sons, a good boy and a bad one. The good boy we shall call Agathos, and the bad one Poneros. Now suppose the father decides what the actions of these two boys shall be for a certain day, without them having any knowledge that he does so. He determines or decrees that Agathos shall go to school; that he shall advise some boys who purpose stealing fruit to forbear; that he shall reconcile two boys who are at variance; that he shall assist another boy in preparing his lesson; and that he shall be diligent at his own studies. He determines or decrees that Poneros shall go to school; encourage strife; speak rudely to a schoolmate; steal fruit; have a fight with another boy; use profane language; and falsify to his father in the evening. He prays with his sons in the morning, gives them a good advice, and they start for school. Having arrived on the ground, they find two boys engaged in a quarrel, and Poneros urges on the conflict, but Agathos interferes, shows them the evil and wickedness of such conduct, and peace is restored

between them. Another boy asks to be assisted in understanding some difficulty in his studies, and Poneros hails him with: "You booby, can't you get your own lesson?" but Agathos pleasantly complies with the request, and readily affords the desired aid. Some of the boys propose going over to an adjoining orchard in order to steal fruit; Poneros approves of the proposition, and is ready to engage in it, but Agathos disapproves of it and endeavors to dissuade them from their evil purpose. Off they go, however, break in, commit the depredation, and having come out with their ill-gotten booty, quarrel about the distribution of it, and Poneros swears and fights in the affray, and in the evening states many falsehoods to his father in order to cover over his evil doings. Now, in the case of these two boys, they do the very things which their father decrees, and his decree is not the cause of their doing them, but their own respective dispositions. The cause of Agathos doing the good is his own good disposition, and the cause of Poneros doing the evil is his own evil disposition. And it is evident that, the things decreed come to pass, without the decree being at all the cause of them.

But it may be said, that in a case of this kind there is no certainty that the things decreed will come to pass, as they only happen to occur in accordance with the decree, and the father does not know that they will come to pass when he makes the decree; and hence the decree is equivalent just to nothing, because nothing results from it. And this may all be true. But suppose the father has such control of all things as enables him to arrange all circumstances according to his own pleasure; then, knowing the dispositions of his sons, he can be cer-

tain that the actions decreed will be performed by them. For in given circumstances he knows that these dispositions will manifest themselves in a certain way, and he can arrange the circumstances so that their dispositions will produce the intended effects. It is an established principle, that the same cause, under the same conditions, will produce the same effect. And the same disposition, in precisely the same circumstances, will act in precisely the same way. Suppose the father, then, decrees that on a certain day his boys shall do the things mentioned above, and knowing their dispositions, and having control of all circumstances, these he can so arrange that their dispositions will go forth in the performance of the very acts which he had decreed. All that the father requires to give certainty to the fulfilment of his decrees is a perfect knowledge of how their dispositions will act in given circumstances, and then, entire control of the circumstances. Having a knowledge of the effect produced by the cause in given circumstances, he can bring the circumstances to bear upon that cause, and then the same effect will be produced. The good disposition will produce good actions, and the bad disposition will produce bad actions, and in order to have any specific actions, good or bad, all that is required is to place these dispositions in those circumstances which will lead them to manifest themselves in the performance of those specific acts.

Now, though the father decrees the actions of his sons, yet his decree is not the cause of their actions, neither is the circumstances with which he surrounds them the cause; their own dispositions are the cause, and the only cause. The decree leaves them free to act as they please, and the circumstances leave them free to act as they



please; and the only thing by which they are controlled is their own disposition. And hence, in the very same circumstances, the good disposition will go forth in the performance of good acts; and the evil disposition will go forth in the performance of evil acts. And this shows that neither the decree nor the circumstances is the cause of their acts, but the diverse dispositions of the boys themselves; for as they act differently in the same circumstances, then, the difference in their dispositions must be the cause of the difference in their actions.

Now in this case the decree secures the performance of specific actions; and yet these boys act freely and from choice in what they do; so that they are certainly accountable; because they act according to their own wish, entirely from choice, and might act otherwise if they pleased; as far as anything apart from themselves is concerned. An overruling providence places them in the circumstances in which they are; but in those circumstances they are free to act according to their own pleasure; and so, from choice, the one does good and the other does evil. And what more freedom could possibly be desired or enjoyed, than the freedom of doing as one pleases, in whatever circumstances he is found? When one may either do good or do evil, according to his own choice, he must surely be accountable for what he does; and is properly the subject either of praise or blame.

And as these boys do the things decreed from no other cause than their own choice, and while they might do otherwise, there would be no inconsistency in their father advising them as to what they ought to do, though he has decreed what they shall do. The father knows that the good disposition of Agathos will lead him to do the

good actions which he has decreed, but why should he not advise his son to do what is good and virtuous? He knows too, that the evil disposition of Poneros will lead him to do the evil actions which have been decreed, yet it is proper for him to advise his son to do no evil, but only what is virtuous and good. He knows his son will do evil, but that is no reason why he should not advise him against it, because his knowledge is not the cause of that evil; and so, though he decrees the definite evil acts, that is no reason why he should not advise him against them, inasmuch as the decree is not the cause of his doing them, but his own evil disposition. He knows the evil disposition of his son will be constantly manifesting itself in the commission of evil, yet it is right for him to command his son not to do any evil; but since he knows this command will not prevent him from doing evil, then it is right to arrange it so, that his evil shall be limited to certain definite acts. And while by the decree he limits his evil to certain definite acts, it is right to command him to do no evil, and if he disobeys to punish him for doing so. And in punishing him for doing so, he deals with him as a free, moral agent, who acts only from choice, though he does the very things which were before ordained.

And we thus see that though all things are fore-ordained yet men may be addressed and dealt with as if it were not so; because the decree does not in any measure impair their freedom of action; they only act agreeably to their own disposition in whatever circumstances they are found; and the divine decree does not in any measure hinder them from doing so. But the dispositions of all being known to the Lord, and having all things

under his own infinitely wise and almighty control, he can surround them with those circumstances in which their dispositions will go forth in the performance of the actions which have been decreed. But the action of the decree terminates upon the circumstances, and does not reach him who performs the action. God works and calls into existence the circumstances, and then man works, and the action is the result. The efficiency of the decree ceases with the circumstances, and man's agency alone is concerned with the actions.

But the divine agency, in the execution of the decree, is not all that is concerned in calling forth all circumstances, for other agencies are usually combined. And whenever there is anything sinful in the circumstances, we may be certain that some other agency has entered in to cause this evil. And though the circumstances are caused by the decree, yet the decree is not the cause of what may be sinful in them, it is caused by the outgoing of some disposition other than that of God. When the happy pair in Paradise were put on probation, the circumstances in which the direct agency of God placed them, were exceedingly and altogether favorable, and free from all sinful temptation. When they were tempted to evil, it was not the divine agency, nor the divine decree, nor anything caused by the decree, from which the temptation came, it came from the evil disposition of Satan; and the decree was not the cause of that disposition. And so in all circumstances where there is temptation to sin, it proceeds from some evil disposition which has not been caused by any decree. And hence, though the circumstances are caused by the decree, yet the sin found in connection with them is not

caused by the decree. And therefore, though the decree brings forth the circumstances, in which the disposition of the agent manifests itself in the performance of the decreed actions, still the decree is not the cause of sin. In all circumstances where there is any temptation to sin, it is from some other agency than that of God. "He cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." It is true indeed, that all the circumstances in which his creatures are found, and in which they act, are brought forth by the overruling providence of God; but he is not the author of the temptations to sin, which may be present in these circumstances, they come from some other source. And, moreover, temptation is never the cause of sin; the cause is the disposition or choice of the sinner himself, and the temptation only brings that disposition into exercise. But though a temptation is never the cause of sin, yet he who offers the temptation is by no means innocent. He sins in that he excites the cause of sin in another. The one sins by offering the temptation, and the other sins by yielding to it. And the tempter does sin, while the tempted may not; because the temptation may be resisted; but the tempter is always guilty. It ought to be observed, however, that temptation is never the cause of any evil action; but the disposition upon which the temptation prevails. This is manifest from the fact, that of two men assailed by the same temptation, the one will sin and the other will not. The liquor seller may assail the tippler and the temperance man with the same temptation, and the one will commit the crime to which he is tempted, and the other will not. They act differently; but if the temptation was the *cause* of their actions, they would act alike. The temptation

is only an incentive to action, while each man's own disposition is the cause; and this accounts for their different conduct, while both are assailed by the same temptation, and are acting in circumstances the same. It is evident, then, that though a tempter to evil is a sharer in guilt, yet the circumstances with which God in his providence surrounds a man, are never the cause of the evil which he does. And hence, when God in his providence places a man in such circumstances as will afford him an opportunity of working out the evil of his nature, what God does is not the cause of his evil deeds; it is entirely the evil which is in his own nature. It is quite evident, then, that inasmuch as God is infinite in wisdom and in power, and has the entire control of all things, and knows infallibly the disposition of each, he can with unerring certainty surround each with just such circumstances as will call forth his disposition, in the performance of the very actions which had been foreordained, while each acts freely and from choice in all he does, and is therefore responsible for whatever he may do.

That something definite may be before the mind, let the imagination rest upon the garden of Eden in all its original loveliness—and the Lord is walking in the garden. For his own glory he resolves to create a moral being; he forms him, and breathes into him the breath of life, and he becomes a living soul. He is formed for happiness; and the desire of happiness must be an innate, active, and controlling principle of his nature. Under the influence of this desire he will always be seeking for happiness, and action will be characteristic of his whole existence; he will always be acting whether his actions be right or wrong. And since he is a moral being, his



actions will have moral quality. And if his moral nature be good, and he be ruled by that nature, then all his actions will be good—being ruled by his moral nature, and that nature being in harmony with the moral law, all he does will be agreeable to that law; hence, his actions will all and always be good. And the goodness of his nature will be the cause of these good actions. The good disposition which is in him will always be going forth, under the direction of his moral nature, in the performance of that which is right. And he has in himself, then, the cause of whatever good actions he may ever do. Let his actions be many or few, fixed beforehand or uncertain, this disposition will still be their course.

But inasmuch as the Lord made this being for his own glory, he has a sovereign right to rule him for this same end. And hence, he has a right to determine in what manner this being shall best accomplish this end, and what those actions shall be by which the Lord shall be most glorified. But the Lord knows, and he alone knows, what actions will be most for his own glory. And he may, therefore, resolve or decree that this being shall perform these good actions and none else. And the Lord can secure the performance of these decreed actions without making known to this being that he has decreed any thing concerning them. By his infinite wisdom and power he can so arrange and control all things, that this being will be placed in such circumstances as will lead him voluntarily to the performance of these very actions. In these circumstances he will do the things decreed, not because they were decreed, but just because he loves to do them. The goodness

which is in him is the cause of these decreed actions, while the decree is the cause only of the circumstances which called forth this goodness in these specific forms. And thus it is evident that this being's own nature is the moving cause of these decreed actions, while the decree is the cause only of the occasion which calls forth the disposition in these special manifestations. Hence, these actions are his own, they are the immediate product of his own nature, and he is to be commended for them, because he does them in the exercise of his own free choice. The decree does not compel him, nor even incline him to do as he does, his acts are the spontaneous outgoing of his own nature, and he might do otherwise if he pleased, and therefore he acts freely, and is entitled to be treated according to what he does.

Now suppose the Lord creates another being, or moral agent, for his own glory, and he is constituted in every respect as the first, having the same active nature, and led to continual action in the pursuit of happiness, and having precisely the same disposition for good that the other had. The Lord, then, is not the cause of any evil disposition in him. And as the Lord created him for his own glory, he has a sovereign right to rule him for this same end. Suppose now, that while the Lord and this newly created agent are together, some other one, say Satan, in the form of an angel of light, presents himself. He addresses this agent and tells him that the one who is with him is not his Creator; that he is an impostor, a usurper, a cruel taskmaster, requiring services which ought not to be rendered. And suppose this agent listens to Satan and is inclined to believe him, and he begins to look upon the Lord with suspi-

cion, he becomes evil affected towards him, and a disposition of opposition to the Lord rises up within him, and he determines to do nothing that the Lord may command, but every thing to the contrary, and even tells the Lord to his face that he will not obey him. Now, the Lord made him for his own glory, and had a sovereign right to rule him for his own glory, has he now lost this right because the agent has become stubborn and disobedient, and has in him an evil disposition? Obviously he has not. The agent has now an evil disposition, but the Lord is not the cause of it; and hence, if he permit him still to live, he may and ought to rule him still for his own glory. He has a right to bound, and limit, and control this evil disposition which is now in this agent. If he suffers this evil disposition to remain and to manifest itself at all, it is his undoubted prerogative to decide in what manner it shall manifest itself, how it shall go forth, when it shall go forth, and where it shall go forth. As it is an evil disposition, it will always be going forth in the commission of evil actions. But the Lord has an undoubted right to control its going forth. He has a right to say in what evil actions it shall go forth, and in what evil actions it shall not go forth. As it will always be going forth in evil actions, he has a right to say that it shall go forth in such of these as will be most for his own glory. He alone knows what these actions are, and therefore he has a right to appoint them; that is to say, the Lord has an undoubted right to decree what those actions shall be, in the commission of which this evil disposition shall go forth. The Lord knows all things possible, and therefore he knows how this evil disposition would go

forth in all possible circumstances, were he not to control it. He knows that it would go forth in the commission of certain crimes—in the commission of A, and B, and C, and D. But he knows that the commission of these crimes would be more injurious and less for the glory of God than certain other crimes—E, and F, and G, and H; and he has a right to decree that it shall go forth in the commission of these, and not in the commission of the former. And he may make this decree not merely for the manifestation of his own glory, but also for the purpose of preventing much evil. He may know that the one class of crimes are far more heinous than the other class, and by the decreeing of these lesser crimes he prevents the commission of those greater crimes; and hence the decree may hinder much evil. But this result is very different from what an Arminian would expect as the result of decreeing evil actions. For he thinks that such a decree must be the cause of evil. But here we see that it may in reality be the cause of good, because it may prevent a great amount of evil, and the good resulting would be in proportion to the amount of evil prevented.

Now is it not possible to understand how sinful actions may be decreed, and yet the decree not be the cause of sin? The decree may be the incidental cause or occasion; but the evil disposition of the agent is the efficient or producing cause. The decree, in fact, is not the originating cause of sinful actions at all, it only decides between two classes of these actions; it secures the doing of one class instead of another; it appoints the doing of the less sinful, and thus prevents the doing of the more sinful class.

And in the case of this moral agent, it is evident that

his freedom is not impaired by those actions being decreed; because in whatever circumstances he is found he is at liberty to act according to his own choice. An overruling providence surrounds him with such circumstances as leads him freely to choose the doing of those very things which have been decreed; but he does not choose the doing of them because they were decreed, but simply because he loves to do them. In the pursuit of his own happiness he freely chooses what he believes will tend most to that end. And if in any way there arise in him an improper desire, this will lead him freely to the doing of evil. And thus the improper desires that are in him, lead him continually to the commission of the evil things decreed; while at the same time he might engage in the doing of good, which is also within his reach, but neglected, because for the doing of this he has no disposition. The cause of good actions is not in him, and hence they are not performed; but the cause of evil actions is in him, and therefore, they continually occur as the legitimate effect of that cause.

For the better understanding of the subject we may use another illustration. Suppose there is on the husbandman's plantation a large fountain of water. The water rises up and flows over the sides, and spreads abroad and fertilizes his fields. But suppose this water from some cause becomes injurious, and it is now ruinous to his crops, and his fountain is constantly filled and overflowing with this noxious water, and he determines that he will not allow it to flow out over his fields as usual. It springs up and he cannot prevent its flowing, but he can control its flowing. He purposes to cut channels for the water, and make openings in the sides of the fountain



where it may pass out. Then, instead of noxious water flowing over the sides of the fountain, he has noxious water flowing out through certain channels. But his purpose to make these channels did not cause this noxious water to flow; it would have flowed if he had not made them; and his making them only secures its flowing in a definite manner. His purpose is the cause of the channels, but not the cause of the noxious water which flows through them. His decree to make these channels cannot be in any way the cause of evil; but on the contrary the cause of much good. By his decree he prevents the destruction of his farm, his fruits, and his grain. And this is supposed to be a fair illustration of what the Lord has done by his decrees, and the foreordination of sinful actions; instead of causing evil, he has prevented an incalculable amount of evil. In the counsels of eternity when he decreed to make man he knew that there would be evil in man; not that he decreed to put it in him, but he knew that it would be there, and he decreed to overrule, to bound, and to control it. He decreed that it should flow forth in certain specific channels. He decreed that this evil which he knew would be in man, should not go forth at random, in the commission of any crimes whatever; but that it should go forth "according to the counsel of his own will," in the commission of such crimes as he pleased. And therefore he decreed the channels through which this evil was to flow. He knew there would be evil in Adam, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be the eating of the forbidden fruit. He knew there would be evil in Joseph's brethren, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be the selling of Joseph.

He knew there would be evil in the King of Assyria, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow would be the slaying and plundering of the people of Israel. He knew there would be evil in "the ten horns," and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be the giving of their kingdom to the beast. He knew there would be evil in those who stumble at the word, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be their stumbling and disobedience. He knew there would be evil in Judas, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be the betraying of the Saviour. He knew there would be evil in Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and people of Israel, and he decreed that one channel through which it should flow, would be the crucifying of the Redeemer. And thus, these evil actions, which were foreordained, were merely the decreed channels, to which the flowing of the evil was confined, instead of allowing it to flow in any manner whatever, or in the commission of crimes, perhaps of a far more heinous nature. And in all these instances the decree was not the cause of the evil; the cause was entirely the evil disposition of the agents themselves. And if this evil had not been confined to these crimes, it would have gone forth in the commission of some others at the same time. And it was surely the Lord's prerogative to control it, and to use it, for his own infinitely wise purpose, in "working all things after the counsel of his own will."

And these agents, in the performance of these actions, were not in any measure deprived of their free agency, though they committed the very crimes which had been foreordained. In the wise and righteous providence of

God they were surrounded with such circumstances as made the doing of these things possible, and as drew forth their evil dispositions in the voluntary choice of their performance. They did not choose the doing of these things because they were decreed, but because they loved to do them. They were decreed for one purpose, and they were done for quite a different purpose. The Lord had a certain end to accomplish by the eating of the forbidden fruit, but Adam did it with a very different design. The Lord had a benevolent end in view in ordaining it, and in sending Joseph into Egypt, and Joseph's brethren did it for a purpose very different. The Lord had one design in sending the King of Assyria into the land of Israel, and the king had a very different design in going there. The design of Christ's murderers was very different from the Lord's design when he decreed his death. The actions were decreed, but the cause of their performance was the evil disposition of the agents themselves. The decree did not at all prompt or influence the agents to do these things, the decree only brought these things within their power, and their evil disposition led them to choose the doing of them. Their choice was voluntary and in no way influenced by the decree, except so far as the decree had a bearing upon the circumstances which afforded the occasion of the commission of those crimes. The decree terminated upon the actions, and did not reach the agents at all; they acted as freely as though the decree never had been made; and they were no more influenced, in their disposition, by the decree than if it never had been made. If the same acts had been within their power, under the same circumstances, they would have chosen their per-

formance, though they never had been decreed. Hence, it is obvious that these agents, in the commission of these crimes, were not influenced to perpetrate them by the decree; the decree only brought the acts within their power, and they freely chose the performance of them.

These remarks explain how it is that the agent is guilty when he only does what was decreed; it is because he does it from choice when he might forbear, and do otherwise. For though the action is decreed, the doing of it depends entirely on his own will. The decreed action is brought within his power, and he may do it, or he may not, as to any influence the decree has upon him; because it has none whatever. He will infallibly do it, however, because he has the disposition to do it. And he is therefore guilty and liable to punishment for doing it, because he does it from his own free choice.

Suppose I know that all kinds of fruit are injurious to my little son, and that there is such a disposition in him as would lead him infallibly to eat every kind. Then this disposition will always be the cause of his eating whatever kind he may eat. And for his good I may command him to abstain entirely from eating fruit. But to show him the evil consequences of disobeying me, or for some other sufficient reason, suppose I resolve that I will not prevent him from eating fruit altogether, and I determine that he shall have the opportunity of gratifying his appetite in the eating of one kind only, say peaches. I have decreed then that he shall eat peaches. And in the execution of this decree I manage it so that he has access to this kind of fruit. Then he may eat it, or he may not; it depends entirely on his own choice. He knows I have commanded him to eat no fruit; and my

decree does not influence him in any way; it does not touch him at all. The only influence I have upon him, by what I have done, is to prevent him from eating. I have warned him against eating, and shown him the evil of his doing so. The only influence I exert upon him has a tendency to hinder him from doing what I have decreed. Instead of coercing, or drawing, or inclining him to eat, my influence has all been to prevent it. And now, though these are the circumstances in which he is found, his strong disposition to eat leads him to disregard and violate my command; and hence he is guilty, and ought to be punished, though he has done only what was decreed; because the decree was not the cause of his doing it, but his own disposition.

Now apply this reasoning to the divine decrees. In eternity the Lord knew that there would be evil in Judas; and that this evil would be the cause of whatever wickedness he would commit; and that it would always be going forth in some form of wickedness; and the Lord purposed to control it according to the counsel of his own will, and decreed the several forms of its manifestation. And hence, one of these manifestations was the betrayal of the Saviour. By the overruling providence of God this wicked deed was fairly brought within the power of Judas, and it depended entirely on his own choice whether he would do it or not. The decree had no manner of influence upon his disposition to incline him one way or the other. And the only way in which the Lord had influenced him was to hinder the doing of the deed. The Lord had commanded him not to do it. The Lord had written in characters of fire upon his conscience—"See thou do it not." All the advantages which the Lord had



afforded to him in associating with the Redeemer were to the same effect. This, indeed, was the only kind of influence which the Lord put forth directly upon Judas in this matter—all tending to hold him back from the commission of the wicked deed. The evil disposition that was in him, however, broke forth through all these barriers in the perpetration of the horrid crime. But he did it in direct violation of the Lord's command; and hence, in righteousness the Lord punished him for it, as the Lord's decree was not the cause of his doing it, but his own wicked disposition. And so it is in relation to every other wicked deed, the decree has no influence upon the agent whatever; what he does is done from the influence of his own evil disposition. The evil deed is the consequence of the forthgoing of the evil within him, and that specific deed, is the decreed channel to which the flowing is confined. All the influence, indeed, that divine decrees have upon evil is to prevent it. Where an evil deed is decreed, the doing of it depends entirely upon the will of the agent, the decree has no influence upon him to cause him to do it; but other decrees have an influence upon him to cause him not to do it; all God's commands, and threatenings, and promises, and the voice of conscience—all these have an influence upon the agent to restrain him from the commission of the crime; and all these have been decreed. So that, the only tendency which divine foreordination has upon the doing of evil is to prevent it.

And here we also obtain an understanding of another thing, which is very perplexing and hard to comprehend; namely, how it is consistent for the Lord to forbid what he has decreed, and to decree what he forbids. He for-

bids the evil disposition to go forth in any form; but as it will go forth notwithstanding, he takes the control of its forth-going, and decrees the forms in which the evil shall be manifested, and thus decrees what he forbids, and forbids what he decrees; and there is no conflict nor inconsistency in his doing so. As all kinds of fruit are injurious to my little son, and as his disposition would lead him to eat all kinds, and as there are sufficient reasons why he should not be prevented from eating altogether, it will be right to decree that he shall not eat all kinds, but only one kind; and as it would be wrong for him to eat fruit at all, it will be right for me to forbid the eating of any kind—hence, the decree is right, and the command is right; and there is no inconsistency in forbidding what I decree, and decreeing what I forbid, when the doing of each is right in itself, there is no inconsistency in the doing of both. If it be right for the Lord to decree that the evil in man shall not go forth without control, but that it shall be limited to certain determinate acts; and if it be right for the Lord to forbid the doing of any evil, then it is right for him to do both; and there can be no inconsistency in him doing so.

From what has now been said, is it not evident that things sinful may be decreed, and yet the decree not be the cause of sin, and that the agent acts freely, though he does only what has been foreordained? All he does is done from choice; and his own disposition is the cause of it all: while the decreeing of sinful acts is only bounding, limiting, and controlling the evil which is in the agent. Just as the husbandman bounds, limits, and controls the noxious water in his fountain. He decrees the channels, and the noxious water flows through them;

but his decree is not the cause of the water. And so, decreed sinful actions are the channels through which sin flows from the fountain of the heart; and the decreeing of these channels is not the cause of the sin which flows through them. Sin comes from the heart, and only from the heart, and though God ordained channels for it, he is in no way the author of it. He knew the evil would be in the heart of man, and he decreed the manner in which it should come forth. As the Bible says: "He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and restrains the remainder of his wrath." He makes the wrath of man, that is, man's opposition to himself, to praise him, by causing it to go forth "according to the counsel of his own will." He restrains the remainder of his wrath by fixing his decreed boundaries, and saying to it, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further." He does not let the flood of corruption flow forth without control. He controls it by his providence, in the execution of his eternal decree. In definite channels he decreed that it should flow; and to these very channels, by his overruling providence, he confines its flowing. He makes the wrath of man to praise him, and he restrains the remainder. Some of the evil comes forth, and a part of it is restrained never to come forth. The Lord, by his decrees, opened channels for a part, and confined the remainder. All that he allows to flow, he makes to praise him; because he decreed *how*, and *when*, and *where* it shall flow. For the remainder he has opened no channels—he has decreed no actions in the doing of which it ever shall come forth. By his decree it is forever imprisoned, and shall never come forth to injure the universe of God. Were it not for the divine decrees all this imprisoned

evil would come forth in a universal flood of sweeping desolation over the whole race of man. The decree has prevented this. And this is what Arminians call "a horrible decree." But can we form any conception of the measure of evil prevented by divine foreordination? If every wicked act that is now done had not been decreed, its place might be occupied by one ten times as bad. We never hear of a deed of wickedness done, but we can conceive of one far worse. If the evil deeds then, which do occur, had not been decreed, their places might be filled by others infinitely worse. If God had not decreed those things in the doing of which the evil of man's heart goes forth, how great it might have been compared with what it is! Suppose the Lord knew that the evil in a man's heart, if left to itself, would go forth in the commission of a certain forty crimes every day, and instead of allowing it thus to go forth, should decree that it shall go forth in the commission of other forty only half as bad, this would diminish the evil one half. Or he might have the decreed forty only one fourth as bad, or one sixth, or one tenth, or one millionth part as bad. We know not how much the evil might be diminished by the decree. Or instead of forty, he might decree that the evil shall go forth in the commission of twenty, or ten, or five. We have no conception indeed of the vast amount of evil prevented by the divine decree, determining the wicked actions which flow from the evil of man's nature. And yet this is what Arminians call "a horrible decree!"

Nor are we left to conjecture as to the certainty of much evil being prevented by Divine foreordination. Because all the evil that is hindered by God's dispensa-

tion of mercy is the result of foreordination. Had there been no divine decree, ordaining some to everlasting life, then every individual of the human family would have been left forever under the ruinous influence of this deadly evil, which is found in the hearts of the whole race. And a single good action never would have been done upon the face of the whole earth, since the day that Adam disobeyed until the end of time. But the divine decree has taken a vast multitude out from under this deadly evil, and infused into their hearts a principle of heavenly life, which goes forth in the performance of righteous deeds. Just think what an incalculable amount of evil has been prevented, and what an unspeakable amount of good has been secured by the divine decree providing a people for the Lord—selecting from the ungodly race “a great multitude which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” and causing them to “cease to do evil and learn to do well.” All the wicked actions that would have been committed by this countless multitude on earth, and during eternity in hell, have all been prevented; and all the good actions performed by this countless multitude on earth, and during eternity in heaven, have all been secured by the divine decree. And who would call it “a horrible decree?” Is it not a glorious decree? a decree on account of which the Lord is worthy of endless thanksgiving and praise? For he is the Author of it, having “chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love.”



## CHAPTER IV.

OUR object now will be to inquire after the nature and origin of that evil in man, which leads him to the perpetration of wickedness; and also to inquire whether it be in him in consequence of Divine foreordination or not. This inquiry is indispensable in ascertaining whether or not Divine foreordination be the cause of sin. It has been made to appear that the foreordination of evil actions is nothing but the bounding, limiting, and controlling the evil disposition which is in man; that the evil deed is only the decreed channel to which the flowing of the evil is confined; that the decree has only determined *how* it shall flow, instead of it being allowed to flow at random and without control. And hence it has appeared that good, and only good, can result from this foreordination. But although only good can result from bounding and controlling the evil in man; yet, if the decree be the cause of the evil itself, then the decree is still the cause of the wickedness committed. If the evil act be caused by the evil disposition, and the evil disposition be caused by the decree, then the evil act is caused by the decree. And so the decree would still be the cause of sin. But on the contrary, if the evil act be caused by the evil disposition, and the evil disposition be *not* caused by the decree, then the decree

is not the cause of the evil act. And hence, the decree is not the cause of sin, but the evil disposition itself.

The inquiry now to be engaged in is rather a formidable one—nothing less than an attempt to ascertain the origin of moral evil. Some will at once pronounce it a very foolish and fruitless work, assuming that this is a matter of which man can obtain no knowledge, as it lies hidden in the obscure and unfathomable depths of the infinite unknown, far, far away beyond “the limits of religious thought.” And some will esteem it as nothing less than unwarrantable presumption, encroaching upon ground not allowed for the incursions of human reason, and into which such investigations ought not to be carried. But are such views well founded? Do they not as much need something to rest upon as that which they assail? Where is the evidence that such an investigation must be fruitless and vain? And where is the evidence that it is seeking to be wise above what is written? Does the Word of God anywhere forbid or discourage such investigation? Does it teach or intimate that the origin of moral evil is unknowable? that it lies in the far off depths of some unfathomable abyss, utterly beyond the ken of the creature man? Or does it not rather treat the matter as though there was nothing incomprehensible or mysterious about it? Of one thing, however, we are satisfied, which is, that the investigation is not forbidden, and some useful knowledge may be gained by its prosecution.

Perhaps the origin of evil in man does not lie so very far off as the infinitudes of eternity, but just at home in himself. Can we not easily find enough in his creatural and complex nature to account for what he has become?

And if so, there will be no necessity of soaring far and high into the misty confines of airy speculation. Nor need any reader apprehend that he is about to be overwhelmed with "those visionary modes of thought; those musings exempt from all regulation; that impatience of aspiration to reach the vast and remote; that fascination of the mysterious, captivating by the very circumstance of eluding; that fearful adventuring on the dark, the unknown, the awful; 'those thoughts that wander through eternity,' which have often been at once the luxury and the pain of imaginative and highly endowed spirits, discontented with their assigned lot in this tenebrious world;" as there is neither taste nor talent for the accomplishment of such a thing; no desire to venture far into the vasty deep of the speculative; the little bark of the unskillful mariner must keep in sight of land, lest it be lost in midst of the unknown. Our wish is to keep to what is known; to deal more with facts than fancies. But, though endeavoring to avoid metaphysics, yet adventence to some of the principles of man's nature is indispensable.

Man has a *will*, and also *desires*. His desires are not merely modifications of his will; the *will* and *desire* are not identical. This is evident from the fact, that the volitions of a man's will are all in relation to himself and his own conduct; but his desires may relate to himself or any one else. A father can desire his children to be pious; but he cannot will it. A man can desire to have a clear day; but he cannot will it. He cannot will anything which depends upon the will of another; but he can desire it. He can will nothing but what is subject to his own will; but he can desire a thousand other things.

And it is thus obvious that the *desire* has objects, which the *will* cannot have, and can act as the will cannot act; and, therefore, *will* and *desire* cannot be the same.

But though will and desire are not the same, yet they are closely allied; there is a very intimate relation between them. And it is likely this, which has led some metaphysicians to confound them together. The connection is so close that the will never acts but under the influence of the desire. Every man is conscious of this; he knows that he never decides to do anything except what he desires to do; he never decides to do anything when he has no desire to do it; he may decide to do it with great reluctance, because there are conflicting desires, but he does it under the influence of the prevailing desire. And the will is always controlled by the prevailing desire. A man always decides to do what he desires most. And he never decides to do anything from any other cause, than by the influence of that desire, which has the most power upon him at the time. We do not appeal to metaphysics in proof of this; but to the universal consciousness of man. Every man who is at all capable of discerning what takes place in his own mind when he comes to a decision, finds that he always makes the decision under the influence of desire; that it is always because he desires something, that the decision is made.

Man is the subject of very many conflicting desires; the causes are both external and internal. A man may wish to please various parties, having conflicting interests; and then he will have conflicting desires. The external causes, indeed, of conflicting desires are varied and numberless. And man, in consequence of the triple complexity of his nature, has in himself an ample suffi-

ciency of causes for the existence of many conflicting desires. He is in himself a threefold being, physical, mental, and moral. And very readily may the three departments of his nature come into conflict with one another. The physical nature may crave what the mental nature would disprove; and the mental nature may cherish what the moral nature would condemn. Nor does it appear at all impossible, nor yet improbable, that such a conflict may occur in consequence of the threefold composition of man's nature. The physical and mental departments of man's nature are referred to by the inspired apostle where he says, "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." Although the word "flesh" is frequently used by the apostle to designate the depraved nature of man, yet this cannot be its signification here, because there are two classes of "desires" mentioned—those of the "flesh," and those of the "mind;" and if by "flesh" man's depraved nature were meant, there could be but one class, as they would all be embraced in the desires of his corrupt nature; unless the ground be taken, that man has a *corrupt nature* and a *mind* distinct from each other; but this cannot be presumed. But though man cannot have a mind distinct from his corrupt nature, yet he can have a mind distinct from what is here meant by the word "flesh," because it designates his *corporeal system*. And the "desires of the flesh and of the mind," are the desires proper to man's corporeal nature, and the desires proper to his mental nature. There are desires which have their seat or origin in man's body or physical



system; and there are desires which have their seat or origin in his mind or mental system. There is in the text a reference to this, and an implied recognition of the threefold nature of man. The apostle here ranges all vices under two heads, those of the "flesh," and those of the "mind." The Apostle John ranges them under three heads: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life;" the vices of lasciviousness, of covetousness, and of vain show. But in this enumeration the term "flesh" has the same signification as in that of the apostle Paul; in both it designates man's corporeal or animal nature. Paul's classification is based upon the inward origin of the vices, and John's is based upon their outward manifestation; the one designates them according to their source, and the other according to the appearance which they present. Paul, in another place ranges them all under one head—"the works of the flesh;" where the term "flesh" signifies man's corrupt nature. The Saviour describes them as all proceeding from the "heart;" by which is meant that their origin is in man himself, that his own nature is the source of his defilement, and not anything from without. And all these representations are in perfect harmony with one another. But the classification into "desires of the flesh and of the mind," is strictly analytical; pointing to the two departments of man's nature in which the vices have their origin.

In classifying "the desires of the flesh and of the mind," they may all be ranged under two of each, and be traced to four original constitutional elements in man's nature. The two constitutional desires or appetites of the body, or physical system, are those of suste-

nance and procreation. Out of these two innate principles of man's physical nature, arise all the vices of drunkenness, gluttony, and lasciviousness, which make such fearful havoc of the human race. In Scripture language these vices are, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, drunkenness, revelings, and such like." And all these sinful desires of the flesh are nothing but the unrestrained and lawless indulgence of those two appetites, which are essential to man's life and continuance as a race, and which are innocent and good in themselves, and were implanted in man by his Creator.

And all the sinful "desires of the mind," will be found to have their origin in two principles of man's mental constitution—*love* and *hate*. His Creator made him capable of loving and hating, and it is proper that he should do so. And all the sinful desires of the mind are the unlawful exercise of these two principles, in their several modifications, resulting from the variety of objects by which this class of emotions are awakened—loving what ought not to be loved, and hating what ought not to be hated—ambition, pride, vanity, anger, malice, spite, revenge—in Scripture language, "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders." All of which are nothing but the varied manifestations of these two original principles, *love* and *hatred*, modified by the varied circumstances through which they have been called into exercise. But "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" ought to be in subjection to man's moral nature. And it devolves upon man, and is required of him to have it so. In virtue of the constitution of his nature, and in

virtue of his free agency, he ought to exercise control over the principles of his own nature, and he may refuse to do so if it be his choice. Herein lies his liberty and liability to err. He is so constituted by the Creator, that the principles of his nature are liable to run into irregular and unlawful exercise, and it devolves upon himself to hinder or to permit this. And were it not so, he would not be a free agent, liable to do wrong, and accountable for what he does. And in exercising the required control over the principles of his own nature, he has the law of his Creator given to him as his guide. This law at the first was given to him both in an inward and in an outward form. He was created with it as a part of his constitution, and it consisted in the perception of a difference between right and wrong, and a sense of obligation to do right, or a sense of accountability to God, and is that which constitutes man's moral nature. It was given to him also in an outward form; and embodied in one single precept. And when the law without said: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it," the law within responded, "God ought to be obeyed." He had thus within, the *sense* of obligation to God; and the command without, as the *measure* of that obligation. So that man was not left without a sufficient rule whereby to regulate the principles of his nature. And it is his imperative duty to regulate them by this rule, and to grant to them no exercise or indulgence aside from what this law will allow.

Man is a physical, rational, and moral being, and it is evident, from the manner in which he is constituted, that the Creator designed the existence of authority and

subordination among the three several departments of his nature; and according to the greater or lesser excellence of each. The physical or animal nature being inferior to the rational and moral, was to be in subjection to both these; and the animal and rational being both inferior to the moral nature, were to be in subjection to it. So that, in the constitution of man, the Creator assigned to the moral nature the place of supremacy. And hence, "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" ought always to obey the dictates of conscience. Conscience should always rule. But by man's apostasy, conscience has been cast down from her rightful place of authority. And in his unregenerate state, man's rational nature has much more influence over his animal nature than his conscience has. His conscience, indeed, has less influence over him than any other department of his nature. And this is accounted for from the fact, that conscience is God's vicegerent in man's bosom, it is God's authority demanding obedience from man; and man by his apostasy has disowned that authority, and cast it away from him: and thus it is, that conscience has less influence over an unregenerate man than any other department of his nature. With the unregenerate it is chiefly the influence of their *rational* nature, which keeps in check and sets limits to the lawless cravings of their *animal* nature; their rational nature revolts at what their animal nature would demand. And hence, the suppression of numberless indecencies over which their conscience has no power. Pride, and ambition, and self-love do much more than conscience or God's authority, to prevent them from giving free scope to all the cravings of their animal nature. And hence it is,

too, that men will maintain considerable control over "the desires of the flesh," and at the same time allow unlimited exercise to the most ungodly "desires of the mind." They will indulge ambition, pride, anger, malignity, revenge; and to such a degree that nothing will satisfy but the blood of their fellow-man. And murder is planned and perpetrated, in compliance with Satan's "code of honor," in open day, by the very men whose animal propensities are held under considerable restraint. Their rational nature rules; and hence, though it keeps in check the lower propensities, to its own passions there is no restraint; inasmuch as conscience, or the authority of God has been disowned.

Another principle in man's constitution to which we must refer is his love of happiness. All living beings love happiness; and they cannot do otherwise; they were so created. And all their activity proceeds from their love of happiness. And the happiness of all living creatures consists in having the wants of their nature satisfied. And the wants of their nature, real or supposed, manifest themselves in the form of desire. Their nature craves something, because it needs it, or is supposed to need it, and then they have a desire for it, whatever it is; and if they do not obtain it they are dissatisfied, and their happiness is, at the time, imperfect. Man's desires all spring from his love of happiness; they are all awakened by this love, and are the outgoings of his nature after it. His desires are the inceptive efforts of his nature to obtain happiness.

Man's desires are all comprehended under three heads—the desire of good to himself; the desire of good to others; and the desire of glory to God. He has not a



single desire besides what are comprehended in these. And these three divisions may be denominated, the *selfish*, the *sympathetic*, and the *sacred*. The word *selfish* is not used in its ill sense; it is used because this class of desires have the good of self for their object; as the *sympathetic* have the good of others for their object; and the *sacred* have the glory of God for their object. To desire our own welfare is constitutional; to sympathize with others is constitutional; and to desire the glory of God was constitutional with man when he was created. And man's desires after these things are the cravings of his own nature for them; his nature demands them, either because it needs them, or is supposed to need them, and therefore he has these desires; and without the things desired he does not feel happy. So that the love of happiness is the origin of all man's desires. And as all his desires spring from his love of happiness, he will desire most what he believes will make him most happy. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. And what he desires most he will choose; because the strongest desire controls the decisions of the will. And hence, under the influence of his proper desire of happiness he is led to choose what he believes will make him most happy. Man is so constituted that he will desire and may choose that which, in his estimation, is most conducive to his happiness. And if it could be possible for man to be mistaken in relation to what would make him most happy, then he would be led to desire and choose what he did not need, or what would not be best for him; and thus his wrong desire would lead him to seek for happiness in a wrong channel. And hence, he could be led

astray in the pursuit of happiness, by the constitutional principles of his own nature.

And reasoning from another ascertained principle in man's constitution we shall reach this same conclusion. We have already seen that in consequence of the three-fold nature of man he will have conflicting desires; the desires of his *animal* nature in conflict with the desires of his *rational* nature; and the desires of both in conflict with his *moral* nature. And we see now that he is subject to conflicting desires in another respect, arising from the circumstance that he is so constituted as to have three classes or kinds of desires entirely distinct from one another—the *selfish*, the *sympathetic*, and the *sacred*; and these may be in conflict one with another; and that too without any one of them being an improper desire. A man may have the selfish, the sympathetic, and the sacred, desires all in conflict, and no one of them wrong or sinful. It is easy to conceive of numberless occasions when this might occur. To instance a single one will be enough. An influential Christian man is engaged in business; in the afternoon of the day he has an arrangement to enter into, of very great importance to his own personal welfare. And while preparing to attend to this matter, a message reaches him that a distant friend is drawing near to death; and the family, in great affliction, earnestly desire his presence while his friend is yet alive. When now perplexed as to what he ought to do, another message arrives, informing him that a meeting is to be held that afternoon of very great importance to the interests of religion, and that his presence is deemed indispensable to secure the welfare of the cause of God. Under these circumstances he will have

three desires all in conflict, and each one right and proper in itself.

It might be supposed that the sympathetic and sacred desires in this case, would not spring from the love of happiness, because in desiring to attend either place he would not once think of his own happiness. True, he would not ; but the desires would be none the less the outgoing of his nature after happiness. His sympathizing nature craves the satisfaction of consoling the afflicted, and hence his desire to be with them. And the affection of his heart for the cause of God desires its gratification in attending to the interests of religion. And thus, though he would not think of his own happiness, yet it would be secured in the realization of his desires. Now, most undoubtedly, man is so constituted by his Creator, that, in more respects than one, he may have desires in conflict with one another. And when it is so, he is liable to follow that desire which has the most influence upon him ; that is, to decide to have what he desires most—what his nature craves most. And his nature will *crave* most, what he believes will make him most happy ; and thus he is liable to *choose* what he believes will make him most happy, whether it would do so or not.

And from these undoubted principles in man's constitution, we see that if, in his state of innocence, there was any possibility of his being brought to believe that it would be more for his happiness to eat the forbidden fruit than to abstain, he would very likely, yea, almost certainly, do it. And now, was there any possibility of him being brought to have this belief? Was there in him any congeneric or inherent evil, which might lead him to be mistaken as to what would be most for his

happiness; and thus lead him to choose what was contrary to the command of his Creator?

One thing is certain, that there is such an evil in man now, because all his wickedness arises directly from his pursuit of happiness in disregard of the will of God. Men do evil in order to gratify the nature that is in them; that is, in order to be happy, as every creature, in seeking to be happy, must desire to have its wants supplied, whether those wants be real or imaginary. This evil, which leads them to seek their happiness in disregard of the will of God, is found in all men, of all classes, all nations, and all ages. We can trace it, as the prominent characteristic of man, through all the stream of time, up to Adam the first of the race. It is found in him, and that, too, before he disobeyed his Creator, for had it not been in him prior to his disobedience, he had not disobeyed.

And not only do we find this evil in the whole race of man, and that even before the doing of the first evil deed, but we find it also among the angels in heaven, and that too before they rebelled; for had it not been in them before their rebellion, this could not have occurred: their act of rebellion was the outgoing of the evil within them. Nor was this evil peculiar to only a part of the angelic hosts, for it was in those who maintained their allegiance to God, as well as in those who fell, and they would all have fallen together, had not the sovereign goodness of God prevented it. Those of them who stood, did not stand because there was nothing in them which would cause them to fall, but because the sovereign grace of God prevented the evil of their nature from having the same effect upon them, which it

had upon those who fell. And hence, those who stood are called "elect angels," because God had chosen them to perseverance in obedience, and to endless bliss. He had purposed to prevent the inherent evil of their nature from causing their fall, that he might thus make known his *goodness* and his *sovereignty* in the exercise of it. He had decreed so to control the inherent evil of their nature as to prevent it from going forth in any act of disobedience. And as to those who fell he had decreed to control the evil of their nature so as that, when it would go forth, it would be in that definite form, which his infinite wisdom had ordained. And their act of rebellion was the decreed channel through which the evil within, in its flowing, was to be confined. With the one part of them he dealt in a way of grace, and with the other part he dealt in a way of justice—upon those who stood he bestowed unmerited favor, and from those who fell he withheld nothing which was justly their due. But had it not been for his unmerited favor bestowed upon a part, they would all have fallen together.

Now, it is undeniably certain that there is something in the nature of angels, as well as in the nature of men, which leads them to disobedience. And it is doubtless true that angels are the highest order of created beings, and it is highly probable that man is the lowest order of moral and accountable beings. We find, then, in both these orders some cause of defection, some evil that leads them to disobedience, something in their nature which assuredly causes them to recede from the path of rectitude. Now, since we find this evil in the highest order, and in the lowest order, we have every reason to believe that it is in all the intermediate orders, if there



be such. And hence, that there are none of God's moral creatures free from this evil, this cause of defection, whatever it may be. It seems to be inherent in them, congenerical with their existence, and so inseparable from their nature that they cannot exist without it, inasmuch as we find it common to all created moral beings of whom we have any knowledge.

It appears, then, that there is unavoidably something in every creature which makes it liable to recede from the line of rectitude—something which renders it absolutely fallible, so that its fall is just what might be expected. And this is in exact accordance with the manner in which the Bible treats the apostasy of man. It never speaks of it as any thing wonderful or extraordinary; it never speaks of it as something strange and unexpected; it never speaks of it as a thing unnatural, or as though it were something altogether unaccountable; it never, in any place, intimates that there is any thing strange about the fact that Adam did disobey. But when it is referred to, it is spoken of as any other natural occurrence might, just as what might be expected from the creature man, because having in him, as every creature must have, the elements of defection from the path of right. The Word of God does not anywhere seem to intimate that it is a strange or unaccountable thing that the creatures of God should fall from rectitude and obedience. (Such Scriptures as Isaiah i. 2, are not in conflict with this position, for they have no reference to this matter.) Nor does it anywhere intimate that we should not inquire into the cause of their fall, as though it were an inscrutable mystery, and not within the allowed limits of human investigation. And certainly it is not

forbidden to us to inquire into the cause, for possibly it may not be shrouded in so much mystery after all.

It is undeniably true that there is something in created beings which tends to carry them into apostasy; and the question is, what can it possibly be? It must be an *evil* of some kind, because it leads to moral evil. And it is found in the creatures of God, just as they come from the hand of the Creator. It cannot be moral evil, for we are told that "God made man upright:" and he also pronounced all things very good. But though there was no moral evil in man when he came from the hand of his Creator, yet there might be the cause of moral evil—there might be the seeds or elements of that moral malady which now rests upon the whole race. The elements of moral evil must have been in man, or else this evil never could have been developed in him. The Tempter did not infuse the evil into him, he only wrought upon the evil which he found already there. The account of the apostasy, which is given in the Bible makes it quite evident, that the Tempter found in the happy pair in paradise, enough through which to accomplish their ruin. And though God pronounced all things very good, yet there was some kind of evil in the creature man. This may appear very strange. He was as good, in one sense, as he could be made, and yet there was evil in him; this may appear more strange, but it is no more strange than true. There was no moral nor physical evil in him, and yet there was some defect, to cause his defection; some imperfection, which made him liable to go astray. And it may be called *the evil of imperfection*; because it is *the evil of imperfect existence*. It is the evil of not having a more perfect existence than what

*created beings* have, or can have. This evil does not consist in the want of something which might be conferred upon them; it consists in the want of something which could not possibly be conferred upon them. And we speak with all reverence when we say, that it is an evil which almighty power could not prevent; because almighty power could not make an absolutely perfect being. Every being that is *made* must of necessity be imperfect. It is not possible that there could be any absolutely perfect being but one, "that is, God." The Creator alone is perfect, in his essence, his attributes, and his operations. And all his creatures must be *imperfect*, in their essence, their attributes, and their operations. It would not be possible for the Creator to make an uncreated creature; but to be uncreated, is essential to a perfect being. It would not be possible for the Creator to make a self-existent creature; but self-existence is essential to a perfect being. It would not be possible for the Creator to make an independent creature; but independence is essential to a perfect being. It would not be possible to make an almighty creature; but a being limited in power is imperfect. It would not be possible to make an omniscient creature; but a being limited in knowledge is imperfect. It would not be possible to make a creature infinite in wisdom; but a being limited in wisdom is imperfect. And thus it is unquestionably evident, that every creature must be limited in its nature, and in all its attributes; and hence it must be imperfect in its nature and in all its attributes. Its existence, then, is an imperfect existence; and the evil of imperfection is inseparable from its very nature.

Now it is an evil to be imperfect, either in essence or

in attributes. It is good to be absolutely perfect, and to fall short of this perfection in any degree, is an evil. It is an evil, however, not of a positive, but of a negative kind. It does not consist in the presence of anything bad, but in the absence of something good. It consists in the want of a greater degree of perfection than is possessed. Absolute perfection is infinite. But suppose absolute perfection consisted in ten degrees, and the creature had only three degrees; then it would fall short of absolute perfection seven degrees, there would be seven degrees of imperfection inhering in it. There would then be in it a deficiency of seven degrees; that is, there would then be in it seven degrees of defectibility. Its liability or tendency to defection, then, would be equal to seven degrees. And the probability that it would run into defection, would be as seven to three. There would be seven degrees of weakness for three degrees of strength. And hence, its tendency to failure would be as seven to three. The creature's fallibility must always be in proportion to its imperfection. The less perfect it is, the more liable it is to fall into error—a child is more liable to mistake than a man. And the more perfect a creature is, the less liable it is to fall. And a being altogether free from imperfection is absolutely infallible. But a being not free from imperfection cannot be free from fallibility. And as no creature can be free from imperfection, it follows, that no creature can be free from fallibility. Every creature, then, is liable to fall, just because every creature is imperfect. And if any creature be not liable to fall, it is not in virtue of anything in itself. It is because some care is exercised over it; some goodness bestowed upon it, which does not

belong to it as a creature; something done for it, to which, as a creature, it is not at all entitled. When it has all that justly belongs to it as a creature, it is liable to fall; and it must be dealt with in a way of grace before this liability is removed.

Now, it must be perfectly just and right in the Creator, to give to the creature what belongs to it and nothing more; and that is to leave it in its fallibility. It cannot be otherwise than right to give to every one his due. And there is nothing due to a creature but what belongs to it as such. And we know from facts that it is right for the Creator to give to the creature what belongs to it and nothing more, because he has really done so. He did so with the angels who fell; and he did so with man when in a state of probation. Because if he had dealt with them in a way of grace, and removed their fallibility, they never would have fallen. If he had overruled the imperfection of their nature in such a manner, as to hinder it from leading them astray, and causing their fall, then they had not fallen. But he left the imperfection of their nature to operate upon them; and it did so operate upon them as to awaken within them a desire for that which was contrary to his will. But there was no constraint upon them to choose contrary to his will. And when they had a desire for that which was contrary to the will of God, they might have chosen contrary to that desire; and if they had done so, they would not have fallen.

Now in order that we may see how the imperfection of the creature operates upon it so as to cause its fall, let us look at the creature man in a state of innocence. He is pure and holy, and free from all bias to sin; but



he is of necessity limited in all his attributes. Take for instance his attributes of wisdom and knowledge, they must be finite, imperfect, and limited. And if he be limited in wisdom and knowledge, he must be incapable of taking a perfect and full survey of any matter that may be presented for his consideration. And if he be unable to grasp the whole matter, in all its bearings, its circumstances, its tendencies, its relations, and its consequences, then he is obviously liable to take a wrong view of the matter. And having taken a wrong view, then the decision of his judgment will be according to the view he has taken. Now the *imperfection* of his nature caused him to take a wrong view, and this wrong view caused him to form a wrong decision in the judgment. And is he criminal in having a wrong view and in forming a wrong decision? Certainly not; for he has not abused nor misused his moral liberty, he is only in danger of doing so, because he is a free agent. But the desire will follow the decision of the judgment. And as the judgment was wrong, the desire will be wrong. Is he criminal in having this wrong desire? No, for he has it not from choice; there has been as yet no action of the *will*; and in the case of an unfallen creature, innocence and guilt depends upon the action of the will. The creature man has now a wrong desire, and is just brought to the turning point of innocence or guilt. Will he be criminal if he choose to follow out this desire? The answer to this question depends on what may be his rule of conduct. If his rule of conduct be his own desire, then he cannot be criminal for following that desire. But if his rule of conduct be the command of God, then he cannot be innocent if he follows his own desire in opposition to

that command. There is no constraint upon him compelling him either way; he may choose on either side he pleases. There is the command of God on the one hand, and his own desire on the other; and it depends on his own will to decide betwixt them. If the will decides in favor of the command, then he has not sinned; but if the will decides in favor of the desire, then he has sinned. And it is very probable that he will choose in accordance with his own desire, because he now feels that his happiness depends on having his desire gratified. That upon which his desire has gone out becomes one of the wants of his nature; he craves it, and feels that without it he cannot be happy. And he has not yet learned by sad experience that his own desires may be most injurious to his well-being; because the *imperfection* of his nature renders him incapable of knowing what would most promote his welfare; nor yet learned by experience how ruinous to his happiness it is, to disobey the command of God. And we cannot say that the holiness of his nature must prevent him from following his own desire contrary to God's command, for we know it did not do so. Nor is it necessary to suppose that it would do so. It is true that in virtue of his holy nature he would have the *sacred* desire in conflict with the *selfish*; but whichever would have the greater influence upon him would gain the decision of the will. And there might be a protracted conflict, and much indecision for a time. But it is admissible to suppose that under the power of temptation, the sacred desire would be very much enfeebled, as is the case with those who are regenerated by divine grace; and as it would become enfeebled, the selfish desire would grow in strength, and in the end obtain the

victory. And we thus see that man may become criminal, not because he has any love for sin, or dislike to holiness, but merely by following the guidance of his own nature, which is all that it ought to be, and as good as any created being can possibly have. The constitution he has received from the Creator is entirely good. He is made to be happy, and hence to seek for it, and this is good; he judges of things according to the view which he takes of them, and this is good; for if he did not, he could not be a rational, intelligent being. He desires what he judges best, and this is good; because it would be impossible for him to do otherwise. And he is at liberty to choose according to his own desire or not, just as may please himself, and this is good; for otherwise he would not be an accountable, free, moral agent. And thus it appears that his entire intellectual and moral constitution given by his Creator is good, and only good; but the *imperfection* essential to him as a creature, interferes and deranges the exercise of the whole. This imperfection leads him to take a wrong view; and this wrong view leads him to form a wrong judgment; and this leads him to have a wrong desire; and this leads him to make a wrong choice; and this brings the will of the creature into collision with the will of his Creator, and constitutes him a rebel against God and his holy law.

It is thus seen that the wrong desire is the immediate cause of the wrong choice, and the imperfection of the creature is the cause of the wrong desire. Now this wrong desire will have nothing of the nature of moral pravity in it; it does not spring out of a vitiated moral taste; it is merely the result of an error in the judgment. It is not the desire of evil, nor does it spring

from the love of evil, or from any aversion to holiness. It is simply the desire of what *appears* to be good. But if this desire, which in itself is not sinful, shall so influence the will as to cause it to decide contrary to the will of God, then sin is produced. When the desire begets a purpose that it shall be gratified, then sin is brought forth. And thus every creature is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed; and when desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. This language of Holy Writ seems to describe precisely how man is led into sin through the influence of desire. "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." In this translation the word *lust* is used instead of *desire*. At the present time the word *lust* is used only to designate unlawful or sinful desire; and hence, the word now signifies something different from mere desire, but this was not the case when the translation was made, as is evident from the sense in which the word is used in the following passages:—"Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee."—"If the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to put his name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock, which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after."—"And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for

strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth; and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and all thy household.”—“The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” When it is said that the spirit *lusteth* against the flesh, the word cannot have an evil signification. And from all these passages it is evident that the word *lust* was not used to signify unlawful desire, but as synonymous with *desire* or *ardent desire*. And in the passage before us it is to be presumed the translators used it in this same signification. The word in the original is often translated “desire,” “ardent desire,” as in the following:—“But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.” Again, “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ.” And again, “And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.” In these passages the original word does not mean *lust* in its modern acceptation, but simply desire, or strong desire. And there is another reason why the word should not be translated *lust* in its modern sense; it lies in the passage itself. Lust in the modern sense is sinful; it is itself sin. But the text teaches that lust conceives before there is sin; and hence, this lust is not itself sin, and is therefore nothing but desire. And to convey the sense the word must now be translated *desire*, and then it will be adapted to the meaning of the text, because *desire* is not necessarily sinful, but it may conceive and bring forth sin. And



*desire* does conceive and bring forth sin, whenever it begets a purpose in the mind to do contrary to the will of God. And there is still another reason why the term should be translated *desire* and not *lust*. The text says that, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." And the meaning is that every temptation comes and prevails in this way, by being drawn away in this manner. The proposition is one of universal application; it is the announcement of a universal truth, and is obviously designed to be descriptive of the manner in which all men everywhere are drawn away into the commission of sin. And Adam in the commission of his first sin cannot form an exception. When he was tempted to this sin he was drawn away, just as every other man is drawn away. But before he sinned there was nothing in him of what is now meant by *lust*; or else there was sin in him before he sinned, and he a sinner before he was a sinner; but this could not be, and as there was no sin in him before he sinned, it follows that there was no *lust* in him; and, therefore, in the commission of his first crime he was not drawn away by his own *lust*, but he was drawn away by his own *desire*. It is true in respect to Adam's first temptation, and all his subsequent temptations, and all the temptations of all his descendants that, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed. Then when desire hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." The original would very well admit the following translation:—"Every man is tempted, when by his own desire he is drawn away and enticed (from the path of rectitude); thus desire having conceived, it bringeth

forth sin, and sin being completed, it bringeth forth death." The meaning is, that it is through or by means of the man's desire that the temptation comes and prevails. It is in consequence of his desire that he is tempted to choose and act contrary to the will of God. He has the wrong desire, however, from the essential imperfection of his nature. The immediate cause of the evil is *desire*, but the ultimate or radical cause is *creatural imperfection*.

Now the account which the Bible gives of the first transgression is entirely consistent with this explanation. It is as follows:—"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." This account is very plain and simple, and nothing obscure or mysterious about it. The reason here assigned for her conduct is, that she saw the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise. She saw these excellences in the tree, that is, she judged or believed that the tree had them, and judging the tree to have these excellences, she desired it. Her desire was consequent upon her belief; but she was mistaken in the belief she entertained; and this mistake was caused by the imperfection of her nature. Had she had that knowledge, which pertains to perfection, she would have known the character of the tempter, and his design, and the falsehood of his statements; and

knowing these things she would not have believed as she did, in relation to the nature of the tree. She was deceived or beguiled; she says herself that she was beguiled, and the Scriptures say the same. It was her imperfection in knowledge, however, that made her liable to be beguiled. She was misled into a wrong belief concerning the nature of the tree, and this belief awakened within her the wrong desire.

Now some would say that this belief in relation to the nature of the tree was sinful; and if it was unavoidable on account of the essential imperfection of her nature, then she could not help sinning, and could not be blamed, for what she could not possibly avoid. And such would be the case if the opinion she entertained respecting the tree was sinful. And some would say that it was sinful for her to listen to the serpent, or to stay where he was. But these opinions are untenable. Because "sin is the transgression of the law;" and she had not transgressed the law. The law forbade to her only one thing, and that was the eating of the fruit. And she did not sin until she purposed to eat the fruit, that is, to disobey the law. There was nothing which could constitute her a sinner without an act of her own will, voluntarily choosing what the law had forbidden, and thus bringing her will into conflict with the will of God. That which constitutes free agency or moral accountability is the faculty or power of choosing between right and wrong. And it was because she had this power of choosing that she was a free agent and accountable for what she would do; and this power or faculty must be brought into exercise before she could commit sin. It was impossible for her to sin without the exercise of this faculty, that

is, without the action of the *will*. And no matter what she did or how she felt if this part of her nature was not brought into action, there was no sin committed. She must *choose* contrary to the will of God before sin is committed; and there could be no sin in her prior to this choice. Fallen man is sinful by nature; and there is sin in him without the action of his will. But Eve was not a fallen creature; there was no sin in her nature; and there could be no sin in her nature, until her will acted in opposition to the will of God; that is, until she decided in her own mind to disobey his command. It was when she made choice of what God had forbidden, that she sinned, and not before; before that she had not transgressed the law; because without that *choice* there could be no transgression. The only thing the law forbade was the eating of the fruit, and that law could not be transgressed until she disobeyed it either in act or in purpose. Her purpose to disobey would be of the same nature as the act, and the law esteems it as such, for the act is nothing but the purpose carried into execution. But before she formed this purpose, she violated no law, and was therefore free from sin. In listening to the serpent she disobeyed no law, for this was not forbidden; in staying where the serpent was she disobeyed no law, as there was no law forbidding this. In doing those things she was not sinning, but she was in danger of sinning. And by believing "that the tree was good for food," and so on, she disobeyed no law; for there was no law forbidding her to have this belief. And in having it she did not *choose* to do anything which the law had forbidden. This belief was not a purpose to disobey the command of God; and without *that purpose* she could have

no sin; because in anything short of that *purpose* there could be no sin; for without that purpose there was no action of that which constituted her a free and accountable being, namely, her freedom and power of choosing between right and wrong. There was no *choosing* contrary to the law; and as long as there was no choosing contrary to the law there could be no sin. In believing as she did respecting the tree there was no action of the *will* contrary to the command of God, and hence she did not sin.

But does not her belief respecting the tree imply unbelief in the testimony of God respecting it? and was her unbelief in his testimony not sinful? It is not denied that her belief respecting the tree was sinful, if it implied unbelief in God's testimony; but it is denied that it implied such unbelief. Her belief was, "that the tree was good for food, was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise," and in believing this she did not reject God's testimony, because he had given no testimony to the contrary. He had not said that it was bad for food, or that it was not pleasant to the eyes, or that it was not to be desired to make one wise; and hence, in believing as she did, there was no rejection of his testimony.

But had not God said that if they would eat of the tree they should surely die? and did not her belief imply a rejection of this testimony? The account given does not say that it did. For though the Tempter preached to her Universalism, we have no account that she embraced his doctrine, and believed that God would not punish them for disobedience—it is not said that she believed they would not die if they would eat of the fruit.



She may still have believed that they would die if they disobeyed, and also believed that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired. So that her belief respecting the tree, does not imply unbelief in the testimony of God.

But even supposing that her belief was *contrary* to God's testimony, this would not imply that she had *rejected* his testimony, or that she did not believe it; because she might have a belief or opinion of her own, contrary to his testimony, and be a believer in his testimony at the same time. The human mind is capable of being in this state, and is frequently found in it. How often does it happen that we have an opinion contrary to the testimony of another, and we neither abandon our own opinion, nor reject the other's testimony? They are both retained, and may exist together for a considerable time, and the mind be in a state of indecision between them. And they will exist together untill the person comes to a decision, and by an act of the will rejects the one and resolves to act upon the other. Take the case of a young man about to enter into business. He has laid his plan, and believes that the course which he intends to pursue is the very best imaginable; but before he enters upon it he feels he ought to have the opinion of his friend, who has had much experience in all such matters. And his friend tells him that his plan is an unwise one, and if he engages in the enterprise it will certainly be a failure. This testimony of his friend has great influence upon him, and yet he is not persuaded to abandon his own cherished purpose. He holds on to his own cherished opinion, and yet he can not but believe that his friend is right. He is not an unbeliever in

what his friend says, and still he has his own belief contrary to it at the same time. And this state of mind may exist for a considerable time. His belief in his friend's testimony prevents him from engaging in the enterprise, and his own cherished opinion prevents him from abandoning it. And he thus believes in the testimony of his friend, and has his own opinion or belief contrary to it at the same time. And he is not an unbeliever in that testimony, until he decides to disregard it, and follow out his own view. And it is thus evident that a belief contrary to given testimony does not imply unbelief in that testimony. The testimony may be believed, and the contrary opinion be entertained at the same time. Unbelief consists in *the rejection* of testimony—a decision of the will to disregard it, and hence, to act contrary to it. And it is thus clearly seen that Eve's belief contrary to the testimony of God does not necessarily imply unbelief in that testimony. Though she entertained an opinion contrary to God's testimony, yet she did not reject it until she decided to disregard it, and to act in accordance with her own belief; and this was just when she decided to disobey the command of God. Her decision to disregard God's testimony, and her decision to disobey his command coincided, because the one involved the other. She could not resolve to disregard his testimony without resolving to disobey his command, inasmuch as his command and his testimony were the same. The act of her will by which she disregarded his testimony, was the act of her will by which she disobeyed his command. But the act of her will disregarding his testimony was the commencement of her unbelief; and hence, her unbelief commenced with her

purpose of disobedience—she believed in God up to that decision of her will by which she disobeyed him. So that her disobedience did not spring out of previously existing unbelief, they both commenced at the same instant, the beginning of the one was the beginning of the other. Her resolve to disobey and eat the fruit was the beginning of her unbelief; for it was in that resolve that she first disregarded God's testimony. And therefore, her disobedience and her unbelief were coetaneous in their existence. Her first sin was her resolve to eat the forbidden fruit, and that resolve was her first act of unbelief. And it is true, that her sin commenced in unbelief; but it is also true, that her unbelief commenced in her sin; because they both commenced in the same act.

She was beguiled then, and led into an erroneous belief respecting the tree, and this erroneous belief led her to desire its fruit. And hence, it was in consequence of the imperfection of her nature that she had this desire, nor could she avoid having it. Her sin, however, did not consist in having this desire, but in deciding to gratify it in opposition to the command of God. Her desire to eat of the fruit was like her belief respecting the tree, there was no criminality in it—there was no transgression of the law of God. The law had forbidden her to eat of the fruit, but had not forbidden her to have a desire to eat it. The desire did not spring out of any depravity of nature, nor was there in it any volition of her will; it was involuntary and without any choice on her part. In the desire there was no exercise of that faculty which constituted her an accountable moral agent—there was no choosing of either good or evil—

there was no decision of her mind in opposition to the will of God, and therefore, there was no sin. When she had the desire for that which was forbidden, if she had chosen to deny herself and obey the divine command she would not have sinned. Her sin was the consequence of following her own desire contrary to that command. And therein lay the test of her obedience, and the turning point of innocence or guilt, just between her own desire and the command of God. Her trial lay in this, that she had a desire for that which was contrary to the command of God, and might either yield to it or not. Had she refused to yield to the desire and obeyed the command, she would have been innocent—she would not have broken the law, because the law in that instance did not forbid the desire, but only the fulfilment of it. Had there been no action of her *will* in opposition to the command, her decision would have been in compliance with the command, she would not have eaten the fruit, the law would not have been transgressed, and the desire would not have been criminal.

There can be no doubt that the law of God extends to the desires of the heart; prohibiting and condemning desires as sinful, no less than acts of the will and of the life. But all desires which might seem to be a transgression of the law are not. The desire of that which is not in accordance with the will of God might be supposed as in no case sinless, because it is the desire of that which is by him forbidden. It must be admitted, however, that there may be the desire of that which is contrary to the will of God, and yet the desire not be sinful. We are plainly told that the blessed Redeemer desired that which was contrary to the will of God, and yet without sin.

When in his agony in the garden, he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt," his words certainly gave utterance to a desire for that which was contrary to the will of God. But though he desired what was contrary to the will of God, his desire was perfectly sinless. He desired to escape the suffering which must be endured in bearing the penalty of the divine law to make an atonement for sin; but this was contrary to the will of God, and a thing which he knew was forbidden to him; and even contrary to God's command. For he says himself, "I have power to lay down my life and have power to take it again. . . . This commandment have I received of my Father." But though it was the command of God that he should lay down his life, yet he desired to avoid it. There is no possibility of supposing that he did not desire this, when he prayed to his Father to grant it to him; he certainly would not pray for what he did not desire. And he knew it was contrary to the will of God to grant it, and yet he desired it; and his desire was without sin. His desire was not contrary to the will of God, but the thing desired was—the desire was not forbidden, but what he desired was. The desire in itself was lawful and right—it was a desire to escape suffering, and in this there was nothing improper, nothing which was forbidden. The desire itself may be in accordance with the will of God, while that which is desired may be forbidden, and contrary to his will. This distinction must be made, because we cannot say that the Redeemer had a desire contrary to the will of God, in the sense that the desire itself was such, for such a desire would be criminal, because what is con-



trary to the divine will cannot be otherwise; but while his desire was not forbidden, nor contrary to the will of God, yet that which he desired was.

And the Saviour's desires, when suffering the temptation in the desert, might also be referred to. We are told that "he was forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing, and when they were ended he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread." Now, in these circumstances, when the Saviour hungered, he certainly had a desire for food. It is impossible for hunger to be felt without having a desire for food; it may be felt without being *willing* to receive food, but not without a desire for it. And the Saviour undoubtedly had a desire for food when it was forbidden to him, and contrary to the will of God that he should have it, but that desire was perfectly innocent, though the thing desired was not in accordance with the will of God at the time.

We might also refer to the case of the apostle, when he said: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." The apostle had a desire to be with Christ, but the thing desired was contrary to the will of God at the time. That which he desired was forbidden to him then, but the desire was not sinful; it was perfectly lawful and right, though the enjoyment of the thing desired was then unlawful. And so it is in many other cases; there are desires which are lawful and right, but the ful-

fulfilment of them would be unlawful and wrong at the time and in the circumstances under which they may be awakened. There may be the desires of food and drink, which are lawful and innocent, when it would be unlawful and criminal to gratify these desires. And there are other constitutional desires, which involuntarily arise, and cannot be hindered, when the fulfilment of them is forbidden and would be unlawful. Sin does not consist in having such desires, but sin may be committed in cherishing them when the fulfilment of them is known to be forbidden. There are desires which are sinful in themselves, and there are desires which are not sinful in themselves, and yet the fulfilment of them would be sinful; it is not the desire which is forbidden, but the fulfilment. The desire may involuntarily arise, neither from depravity nor choice, as in the case of the Saviour, when that which is desired is not in accordance with the will of God, but the desire be entirely sinless in its nature. And this was doubtless the nature of Eve's desire; it originated neither in depravity nor in choice, but was the involuntary result of the erroneous view which she was led to form respecting the tree by the deception which was practised upon her. It appeared to her a desirable tree, and hence she desired it, and through that desire she was tempted to eat. The desire conceived the purpose of eating, and thus it brought forth sin. But obviously it was through her weakness, the essential imperfection of her nature, that the serpent succeeded in persuading her that the tree was desirable for her use. Had she not been limited and imperfect in all her attributes, she would not have believed that the tree was desirable, and so she would not have desired it.

Had she been perfect in knowledge, and known the character of the Tempter, and been able to comprehend the consequences of eating the fruit, she would not have desired to do so. Had she been competent to take a full survey of the whole matter, in all its bearings, its circumstances, its relations, its tendencies, and results, she never would have believed the tree was desirable for her, and she never would have desired it; but being unable to take this view of the matter, she was led to desire the tree. And then she was tempted when she was drawn away of her own desire and enticed. And desire having conceived the purpose of eating, it thus brought forth sin, and sin being completed, it brought forth death. By deception she was led to have a desire for that which was forbidden. And her feeling then was that she could not be happy unless this desire were gratified. She had not yet learned what every intelligent, rational, free agent is obliged to learn, namely, that happiness is not to be obtained by the gratification of every desire that may arise, but by submission to the will of God. For, inasmuch as man is a rational, moral being, his own desires do not constitute his guide in the pursuit of happiness, as is the case with the lower orders of creation; because the law of his Creator has been given to him for this purpose. And hence it is that his desires and this law may come into conflict. And in it being so, that he may have desires for that which the law does not allow, is afforded a ground of trial to test his willingness to submit to the authority of his Maker. If man had not been originally so constituted, as that he might have these desires, there would have been no possibility of testing his willingness to obey, in the capa-

city of a free moral agent. But his nature is such that, in the exercise of his judgment, he may be led to believe that there are things essential to his happiness, which his Creator does not allow him to enjoy. And when man has such desires, he ought to be assured that they are the result of some mistake on his part; because what his Creator forbids to him cannot be essential to his happiness, and that, therefore, his own desires are to be disregarded, and God relied on for happiness, believing that he knows best what will make happy, and that he will grant it to those who submit to his will, in relinquishing the desired objects which he has forbidden. And whenever man prefers his own desire to the will of God, it is a renunciation of dependence upon his Maker, and a declaration on his part that he will rely upon himself for his own happiness. And the import of such conduct is, that he knows best himself what it is that will make him most happy. And thus it is that men seek to "be as gods knowing good and evil." And by following their own desires in the pursuit of happiness, they are brought into conflict with the law of God, just as was the case with Eve when she was first led to disobey.

The love of happiness was one of the constitutional principles of her nature. And she was brought to a state of mind, in which she supposed she could not be happy, unless she would eat of the forbidden fruit. And under the influence of this principle of her nature, *the love of happiness*, she was led into sin. But the love of happiness was not the cause of her sin; seeking happiness in a mistaken way was the cause. And this seeking in a mistaken way was caused by the essential im-

perfection of her nature. This imperfection led her into an erroneous belief as to what was essential to her happiness; and under the influence of this belief her desire for it was awakened, and then her feeling was, that unless this desire were gratified she could not be happy. And thus it was her love of happiness, under the influence of the imperfection of her nature, and in connection with her liberty of choice as a free agent, which brought her to transgress the law of God. But it is perfectly obvious that the evil of *imperfection* was the radical cause of the transgression. And it is as perfectly obvious that there was nothing compelling her to disobedience, and that it was entirely voluntary on her part. The imperfection of her nature caused her to have a wrong desire; but it did not compel her to choose its gratification, contrary to the will of her Creator. When she had the wrong desire, it depended solely on her own will, whether it should be gratified or not. She might decide in favor of her own desire, or she might decide in favor of her Creator's command. Her decision was a perfectly voluntary act; and hence she was responsible. When she was brought to have a desire for that which God had forbidden, she was brought to the turning point of innocence or guilt. And she was brought to that point where the rational creature is to learn its dependence upon its Creator, and its subjection to him: and where it is to learn that the law of its Creator is to be the guide of its choice, and not its own erratic desires—virtually its own fallible opinion as to what is best—what will most subserve the end of its existence, the glory of its Creator and its own chief good. And when she was brought to this point, it is evident that the proper place



of the creature was to submit to the Creator, mistrusting herself and trusting in him. But she had not yet learned that self could not be relied upon, and that "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." And in submitting she would have to deny herself, and relinquish what she then desired. And this was what she never had been accustomed to, and would be difficult to begin. And now the desire had strengthened her belief that the tree would be good for her. She believed this at first through misrepresentation, and that belief is now strengthened by her desire for it. And then as the belief increased, so the desire increased. The more she desired it, the more she believed it, and the more she believed it, the more she desired it. And under the influence of this desire she was led to make the fatal choice. But her Creator was not in any way the cause of her disobedience. It is true indeed that her desire of happiness was the immediate cause, and her Creator had endowed her with it; it was a good and precious gift. But then the misguiding influence of her creatural imperfection so acted upon her desire of happiness, as to give it a wrong direction, and thus caused it to be the cause of her disobedience. The Creator imparted to her nothing but what was good; but that imperfection, which was inseparable from her as a creature, was the cause, and the only cause of all the evil which has arisen. The immediate cause of her disobedience is the immediate cause of all other disobedience; and is nothing but the desire of happiness. But by the creature's imperfection, this desire is misdirected; and then "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed; and thus the desire having conceived, it bring-

eth forth sin, and sin being completed, it bringeth forth death."

And as to Adam's disobedience, the cause was not at all different from that of Eve's. The immediate cause was the misdirected desire of happiness, and the cause of that misdirection was the essential imperfection of his nature. According to the view which he took of the matter, his conviction was that it would more promote his happiness to eat than to forbear. He saw that Eve had eaten, and, as he supposed, death had not ensued, as had been threatened; he saw that instead of being injured she appeared more happy. And, if it was needful, she no doubt used very urgent entreaty; and as the poet represents, it is probable that he thought it would be better to live with her or to die with her, than be separated from her. And such being his views and feelings, he felt and believed that his happiness was to be secured by eating of the fruit. His proper desire of happiness was misdirected by his creatural imperfection. And thus he was tempted when he was drawn away of his own desire and enticed. So then, desire having conceived the purpose of disobedience, sin was brought forth; and sin being completed, it brought forth death.

And now, may it not safely be assumed, that the origin of evil in man is the creatural imperfection of his nature? and that all the evil which is now found in him has sprung from this congeneric and inseparable source of defection? It will sufficiently account for his straying from the path of rectitude; being turned aside, not by the love of evil, but by the misconception of what is good. The Tempter said, Ye shall be as gods, or rather as God, knowing good and evil, and they desired to rise

to this measure of excellence; and to know, as God did, what would be for their good and what would be for their hurt; and thus how they might rise to the perfection, glory, and happiness of God himself. And their effort after this imaginary excellence, through the imperfection of their nature, brought them into conflict with the will of God. And thus, though God made man upright, through the creatural imperfection of his nature, he has sought out many inventions. He was created, indeed, with a good disposition, but there were the elements in him of an evil disposition. And none of the departments of his complex nature was exempt from these elements; creatural imperfection was common to them all. The seeds of disease were in his physical, mental, and moral constitution. Moral evil was not in him, but the seeds of moral evil were in him—the elements of that sore moral malady under which he now lies, had then a real existence; they were in him, and by the workings of his complex nature they were stimulated, quickened, and evolved, in the form of an evil disposition; under the operation of which, his original goodness, if not entirely annihilated, was at least wofully marred, weakened, and subdued. He may not have lost every kind of goodness; but all his love for God and holiness was certainly destroyed; and he became an “enemy in his mind by wicked works.”

The Scriptures tell us that, “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.” The mind of man in his apostate, fallen condition is enmity against God. And the Scriptures tell us also, how the mind of man has been changed into enmity against God; it is “by wicked

works." The apostle says: "And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." It is "by wicked works," and by no other cause, that the mind of man has been changed into enmity against God. There was no enmity in Adam's mind against God until he sinned against him. He felt no dislike to God or his holy law until he transgressed that law. But when he sinned, he felt that he had done an injury to God, and that God was displeased and angry with him. And then he felt that God was his enemy, and feeling that God was his enemy, there arose within him enmity against God. The thought of an enemy stirs up enmity against him. And wicked works also change the mind from innocence to guilt, from holiness to unholiness. Adam's one sin destroyed the holy image of God from his nature, and impressed it with the moral image of Satan. Only one sin was necessary to change his nature from being a holy nature into a sinful nature. When he sinned he could not be any thing else than a sinner, and a sinner cannot be a holy being; he must be morally depraved, and a being morally depraved must have a depraved nature. A sinner must have the nature of a sinner, which is a sinful nature. He cannot be a sinner and yet have no sinful nature, for no being can sin without corrupting his own nature. To sin and yet retain a holy nature is evidently a thing impossible; because it is sin which corrupts and makes one a sinner. And no one can become a sinner and keep his nature free from sin, because it is sin which changes the nature from holiness into its opposite. Indeed, to suppose that one might sin, and his nature thereby not be made sinful, is

to suppose a contradiction; it is just to suppose that one may make himself sinful, and yet not be sinful. And it was when Adam sinned that he became a sinner. It was then that he changed himself from that character and nature which his Creator gave him. By his sin he became a quite different being, in his moral nature and character, from what he was when created. When created, his moral nature and character were morally pure and good, but by his sin his moral nature and character became morally depraved and bad. And nothing could make this change in his nature but his own sin. It was his own "wicked works" which changed his nature from love to enmity, and from holiness to sin. No one but himself, and nothing apart from himself, had power to work this change in him. He himself could do it and no one else could. This is evident from the nature of the change which was wrought upon him. He was changed into a sinner, and no one, nor any thing, could make him a sinner but himself. Satan could not do it, by infusing sin in any way into his nature. Satan has no such power. And even had he power to infuse sin into another, the other could not be held guilty on account of it. Sin infused into Adam by Satan would not have made Adam a sinner; the sin in that case would have been Satan's and not his. His own act in voluntarily choosing to disobey was the only thing that could make him a sinner. Others might tempt him to sin, but to make him a sinner his own act was indispensable. And his first sin was the beginning of the corruption of his nature. By that sin he changed his nature from holiness to its opposite; he became a morally depraved being. And after this change had



passed upon him, "he begat a son in his own likeness," and hence, all his posterity have the same depraved nature. A pure stream cannot flow from a polluted fountain. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." It is man's sin that corrupts man's nature, and turns it against God and holiness, and not any thing extraneous to himself; nor is it any thing concealed, or mysterious, or unaccountable. And to say that man's nature must be turned against God before he can sin is self-contradictory, because the turning of the nature against God is sin. And the committing of the first sin is just the beginning of turning the nature against God and holiness. Committing sin is turning the nature against God, and nothing else is. And the more any one sins, the more he corrupts his nature, and turns it the more against God. Such are the teachings of Scripture: "Evil men and seducers wax worse and worse." The corruption of man's nature commenced in his commission of sin, and by the practice of sin he becomes still more and more corrupt.

And it is thus seen that the creatural imperfection of man, in connection with his free-will, sufficiently accounts for what he has become. We see how it was possible for Adam, through the imperfection of his nature, to be led to the commission of sin. And by the commission of sin his nature was changed and corrupted, and made averse to God and holiness; he became an enemy in his mind *by wicked works*, and his corrupted nature is inherited by all his posterity. And though his nature was originally holy, yet it is not impossible to perceive how he might be led into sin, inasmuch as it resulted from his *mistake* respecting what was essential to his happi-

ness. But though he was mistaken as to this, yet he desired it as much as if it had been essential, and then he felt that he could not be happy unless it was enjoyed. And when he had this desire for the forbidden fruit, he doubtless had a desire, at the same time, to do what was right. This would result from the rectitude of his nature. And whichever desire would have the more influence upon him, would incline his will to decide in its favor. If his desire for the fruit had more influence upon him than his desire to do right, then his choice would be on the side of the stronger of these conflicting desires. Though it might be with reluctance, and in the midst of great mental conflict, yet he would decide in compliance with the one desire, and in opposition to the other. Nor is it impossible to perceive how his desire for the fruit might have more influence upon him than his desire to do right. When he had the desire for the fruit, his feeling was that he could not be happy unless the desire should be gratified, and that to refrain would be to forego his own happiness; and then feeling that it was in his own power to make himself happy, he would likely decide in favor of doing so. But was it possible for the aversion of his holy nature to sin, to be so overcome as that he would consent to commit sin? He being holy, and hating sin, how could he be brought to commit it? It was doubtless because his love of happiness had more influence over him than his love of holiness, or hatred of sin. Through his mistaken belief respecting the tree, he felt that the fruit was essential to his happiness, and that, therefore, it was necessary to do wrong in order to be happy. And he was thus brought to such a position as to believe that to do wrong

was indispensable to his happiness. He had then an aversion to doing wrong, and a love for his own happiness in conflict with each other; and which is to have the ascendancy over him, and govern his conduct? There is good reason to believe that his love of happiness may so overcome his aversion to sin as that he may be led to do what he knows to be wrong. Because it is probable that the love of happiness was stronger, and had more the control of him than any other principle of his nature.

The love of holiness or aversion to sin, which is in a created holy nature, is not unconquerable, it may be overcome. This is certain from the apostasy of both angels and men. And though aversion to sin is a principle in their nature, there is some other principle in their nature no less powerful and influential in directing and controlling their conduct. For it is something in themselves, pertaining to their own nature, which leads them to sin notwithstanding their aversion to it. If there were not something in themselves, which has as much influence over them as their hatred of sin has, they never could be induced to commit sin. The fact that they voluntarily commit sin, although their nature is holy, is proof positive, that there is something in their nature, which has as much power over them as their holy nature has. It prevailed over the holy nature of the angels who fell, and over the holy nature of Adam and Eve in Paradise. And we can conceive of no principle in created beings so powerful to control them as their love of holiness, except it be their *love of happiness*. And it is evident that, through the imperfection of their nature, these two principles may come into conflict. And it remains with the free will of the agent, which is to have

the ascendancy. With man, even in his innocence, by the act of his own will, the love of happiness was allowed to prevail. He might have decided in behalf of the love of holiness if he had chosen to do so: that is, he might have decided to exercise self-denial, and do what he knew to be right, had it been his own pleasure. But even then, the love of happiness had such influence over him, that it led him to choose contrary to his convictions of duty. It was a very influential principle in man's nature then, and it is still the same. We see it to be the grand moving cause and mainspring of all activity. That world-wide, multifarious, and ceaseless activity, prevalent everywhere throughout creation, is nothing but the busy chase after happiness. This principle is sovereign in man's nature now; and in all the lower orders of animated nature. And we have good reason to believe that this is the principle which prevails over the holy nature of created beings, and causes them to sin, notwithstanding their aversion to it.

It is this principle which now leads men to sin contrary to the convictions of their own mind. Were it not for the gratification they have, or hope to have, they would not sin in opposition to the sense they have of what is right and best. It is this irresistible love of present happiness, which urges men forward in those courses of crime, by which they apprehend they may eventually be ruined. Their love of happiness, in the form of actual enjoyment, has such control of them, that they are unwilling to forego a present gratification, either to avoid an apprehended evil, or to realize a larger measure of happiness at some future time. And as this is the principle which now everywhere hurries men

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into sin, in spite of their own convictions, there is no reason to doubt that man's sin was commenced by the urgent influence of this same principle; and that Adam committed his first crime in opposition to the desires of his own holy nature, under the influence of this all-controlling love of happiness. When through his mistake respecting the nature of the tree, he was brought to desire its fruit, he then felt that the desire must be gratified or his happiness was gone. And though he had an aversion to sin, yet his love of happiness was so strong that this aversion was overcome. And then the decision of his will was in favor of the desire for present enjoyment, because this was the prevailing desire at the time. His love of happiness had more influence over him than his aversion to sin. Not that he really secured happiness by his disobedience (except the momentary happiness resulting from the gratification of a desire); but he *believed* that he would secure his happiness; and this erroneous belief resulted from the creatural imperfection of his nature.

But would not his love of happiness have such an influence upon him as to prevent him from doing wrong; inasmuch as the fear of losing his happiness by doing wrong would overcome his desire for doing it? It is not at all likely that it would; because the fear of losing his happiness would be very slight at the time, as he could not fear that his happiness would be lost by doing the very thing, which he believed would secure it. When he believed that eating the fruit would make him happy, he could not fear the loss of his happiness by doing so. He might perhaps have the apprehension of some future evil; but the apprehension of some future,



unknown, unexperienced, and uncertain evil, would avail but little against the desire of a present, felt, needed good, just ready to be enjoyed. He had not yet had the experience of any evil: he did not yet know what the loss of happiness would be; but he had a then-felt experience of what he wanted in order to be happy. And all the experience he had hitherto had, was of this same kind, and tended to the same result; for he knew he had always been happy in the enjoyment of those things he had desired: and he had no experience of ever losing his happiness by their enjoyment. So that his present feelings and his past experience all taught him that his happiness was to be secured by the fulfilment of his desires. And against all this the apprehension of some unknown future evil, would be of but little avail. Nor can we conceive of anything in his nature, which would make it either impossible or improbable, that his choice would be in compliance with his desire for the fruit. And it is manifestly seen that the elements of his defection all had their existence in himself. Nothing more is necessary than what was in man when created, to account for what he has become. That imperfection which was inseparable from him as a created being—the love of happiness a prevailing principle of his nature—and that freedom of choice which belonged to him as an accountable free agent—these three being found in man, we are fully able to account for his apostasy from God. Through the imperfection of his nature he is led to take a wrong view respecting what is essential to his happiness; and this leads him to form a wrong judgment as to what is best; and the desire follows the decision of the judgment; then, by the influence of the love of happiness, he

is liable to choose even that which is forbidden. He need not so choose; but he is liable to do so; and he has done so: and hence the evil nature which is now found in man.

Moral evil in man we trace then to the creatural imperfection of his nature. This is the original source from which all his evil thoughts, words, and deeds do ultimately proceed, through the action of his own free will. And the divine decree extends to all the evolutions of this primary evil. It determines the wrong view which the moral agent takes, and the wrong desire which he has, and the wrong choice which he makes, and the wrong deed which he does; that is, these are all decreed. Now apply this to the case of Adam's disobedience. It was decreed that he should take the wrong view, have the wrong desire, make the wrong choice, do the wrong deed. Or in other words, it was decreed that Adam should eat the fruit, that he should choose to eat it, and that he should desire to eat it; and yet the decree was not the cause of his eating it; for the imperfection of his nature was the cause of his wrong desire, and this was the cause of his wrong choice, and this was the cause of his wrong deed. And thus the imperfection of his nature was the cause of his eating the forbidden fruit. The eating was decreed, the choice was decreed, the desire was decreed, but the imperfection of his nature was not decreed; and this was the fountain whence all the evil flowed; and the decree only regulated the manner of its flowing. The desire, choice, and act, may be compared to so many divisions of a waterpipe. The desire is one division, the choice is a second, and the eating is a third. But though the decree is the cause of these di-

visions, yet obviously it is not the cause of the evil which flows through them. That which flows is the evil of creatural imperfection, and the decree is not the cause of this. This evil goes forth in the form of the ordained desire, choice, and act; but the ordaining of these was only determining the manner in which the evil should go forth, instead of allowing it to go forth without control. This evil in Adam, if not prevented by Divine goodness, as in the case of the elect angels, might, and would, develop itself in some form; and the ordaining of that form of development, which it had in the garden of Eden, was only restricting its development to that particular form, instead of allowing it to take some other course. The decree only limited, controlled, and gave a certain direction to the outgoing of that evil of imperfection which is essential to man as a created being; but which might be controlled by man if he would. The decree does not cause the evil, it only controls it.

The evil of creatural imperfection, however, or *creatural evil* is not *moral evil*; but in passing through the laboratory of the human mind, it is transmuted into moral evil. In the mistaken view, opinion, and desire, it is nothing but *creatural evil*, but when it passes under the influence of moral liberty and comes forth in the form of a forbidden and criminal choice, it is then changed into *moral evil*. It is the action of the will upon creatural evil which changes it into moral evil. It is the choice of evil, or the evil purpose, which vitiates creatural imperfection, or infuses into it the quality of moral evil. The *creatural evil* in Adam was changed into *moral evil*, by his purpose to eat the forbidden fruit. By that purpose his *fallible* nature was changed into a *fallen* na-

ture—his *corruptible* nature was changed into a *corrupted* nature—his *imperfect* nature was changed into an *impious* nature. Yet his *impious* nature is nothing but his *imperfect* nature transmuted into an evil disposition, by the action of his own free will.

And the evil disposition in man is only what is in him as a creature, *but vitiated by the action of free will*, and by himself, and from choice, changed into a nature averse to holiness, and in love with sin. And had it not been for Adam's own choice, the imperfection of his nature never would have been changed into an evil disposition morally corrupt and opposed to the law of God. And all the decreed evil acts of men, are only the appointed channels to which it was determined that the flowing of the evil which is in man himself should be confined. The Lord knew what would be in man in consequence of his creatural character; and it being his pleasure, for infinitely wise and holy ends, to allow man's creatural imperfection, by the action of man's free will, to go forth into moral evil, he ordained all the channels through which it should pass; or, in other words, foreordained all the actions, of which he would allow it to be the cause; but *it* is the origin of these actions, and not the decree which confines its evolution to these acts, and to these alone.

Now, it is hardly necessary to say, that the decree is not the cause of this evil of imperfect existence. The essential imperfection of a creature is not in it in consequence of a decree. If the decree was the cause of its being in a creature, then if it had not been decreed the creature would be free from it; but it is impossible for a creature to exist without it. Hence the existence of

creatural imperfection does not depend upon a decree, but upon the unchangeable nature of things; that is to say, a creature must be imperfect, just because it is a creature; and no decree could change it in this respect. A decree could not remove the creatural character of a creature; and hence, a decree could not remove the imperfection of a creature. It is obvious that the creature's imperfection does not result from the will of the Creator; it is not imperfect because he wills it; nor could any act of his will take away its imperfection. He could, however, by an act of his will prevent the creature's imperfection from ever going forth to work the creature's ruin, if it only seemed good in his sight, but to do so has not been in accordance with his pleasure. When the Lord purposed to call creatures into existence, it did not depend upon his choice whether he would make them perfect or imperfect. If they be made at all, they must be made imperfect; because it is impossible to make a creature anything but a creature. If a man purposed to make fire, it would not depend on his will whether he would make it having heat or without it; if he make it at all it must have heat. The heat in the fire does not depend upon the will of him who makes it, but upon the unchangeable nature of things; that is, it cannot be fire without heat. The man cannot prevent the heat being in the fire which he makes; but he may direct and control the heat according to his pleasure. And so the Creator could not prevent the imperfection from being in the creature; but he can so direct and control it, that it will in the best manner subserve the infinitely wise and righteous design of the creature's existence. It is perfectly obvious that a decree could not remove the imper-



fection of a creature, or else a decree could remove the difference which exists between a creature and the Creator; for the creature's imperfection consists in the absence of what is essential unto God. To take away his imperfection, then, would be to confer on him the perfections of Divinity, that is, to make him God. But argument is unnecessary, for it is perfectly obvious that creatural imperfection has not been decreed; and as this is the origin of moral evil, then it follows that the decree is not the cause of it. The foreordination of all things is only assuming the direction and control of that essential imperfection, which free agents may, and do by their own voluntary acts, change into an evil disposition.

The cause of man's evil actions is man's fallibility. If man had not been fallible he never could have sinned. If Adam had not been fallible he never could have fallen. His fall was the effect of his fallibility; and hence his fallibility was the cause of his fall. And therefore, the decree of God was not the cause of it. His fall was decreed, but that decree only determined what should be the effect of the cause, which was Adam's fallibility. Though it was decreed that Adam should eat the forbidden fruit, yet that decree was not the cause of his eating, the cause was in himself; and was the essential fallibility of his own nature. The Lord knew that, if he would not prevent it, this fallibility would go forth in some form by the decision of Adam's free will, and he decreed that it should go forth in this particular form, instead of allowing it to go forth in any other way. He decreed the act of eating, and the circumstances which brought the act within Adam's power, and it then depended on his own choice whether he would eat or not. He did eat,

and the fallibility of his nature was the cause, while the decree was only the cause of the circumstances, which called forth this fallibility in this particular form. In other words, his fallibility was the *cause* of his eating, while the decree was only the cause of the *occasion* of his doing so. And as man's fallibility was not foreordained, and as this is the cause of man's sin, then the cause of his sin has not been foreordained. And we thus find, that though all the sins of men have been decreed, yet the decree is not the cause of their sins, as the cause is in themselves. And we see also, that the foreordination of all things does not impair the free agency of man; except so far as it leads him to choose a particular class of good or evil actions, instead of leaving him to choose some other class of the same kind. The decree does not lead him to choose evil instead of good; but it leads him to choose a particular kind of evil, instead of leaving him to choose some other kind. And we have fairly reached the conclusion, that, though all things have been foreordained, yet foreordination is not the cause of sin, nor is the free agency of man thereby impaired.

The objections urged by Dr. Tulloch, in his *Theism*, against the theory of "metaphysical imperfection," have but little bearing upon the views we maintain, though it might be supposed that they have a great deal. The theory which he sets forth and combats, is one which makes creatural imperfection and moral evil identical; that is, it makes moral evil to consist in creatural imperfection; but such is not our view at all. It is against the making of sin to consist in creatural imperfection, that all his principal objections are urged. This is evi-

dent from the objections themselves. He says: "And first of all, the conception which it presents of sin is in direct contradiction to the moral consciousness. Sin is not the *ens privatum* which this theory holds it to be; it is, on the contrary, of an essentially positive character." And also, "It is of the very essence of sin that it reveals itself from the first, as an element of disorder and opposition within us."

And so we say, that sin is not a *thing of privation*; but "is on the contrary of an essentially positive character." And with him we say also, that it is "of the very essence of sin, that it reveals itself from the first as an element of disorder and opposition within us." Sin is not a mere privation; it is the positive contrariety of the creature's free will to the law of God. But we have shown how the free will of the creature may be brought to oppose God, through the essential imperfection of his nature. And we have shown "that sin is an element of disorder within us;" and how this disorder results from our creatural imperfection. Because, through the limitation of our nature we are liable to be mistaken as to what is essential to our happiness, and thus be brought to desire what is forbidden. And then, by the influence of this desire upon the will, *which is free*, we are liable to choose in opposition to the law of God. And it is just this creatural imperfection of man's nature, which accounts for the "element of sinful disorder and opposition," which is now in him.

Another objection is this:—"But further, in making sin, as this theory does, the necessary result of the imperfection of our nature, it thereby, no less than all other theories, really destroys it. For sin being neces-

sary, it is no longer morally blamable. If it springs out of the essential limitations of our being, it is no longer a fault, but only a misfortune."

But the representation of sin as *necessarily* springing out of the essential limitations of our being, is not our theory at all. For though sin may be traced to creatural imperfection as its origin or cause, yet this does not make sin *necessary*; it only makes it possible—it only makes the creature *liable* to sin, while there is no *necessity* of his doing so. It makes him liable, because it brings him to desire what is forbidden. But then, it depends upon his own free will whether he shall follow that desire, or obey the command of God. Though of *necessity* he has the desire, there is no *necessity* that he should comply with it. Herein is just that which constitutes him a free moral agent, accountable for what he does, and liable to do wrong—from the "essential limitations of his being," he is liable to desire what the law of God forbids; and then, having this desire on the one hand, and the command of God on the other, he stands in the critical place of trial. His will is free, and with himself it remains to decide, which he will comply with. Adam, through "the essential limitations of his being" was *liable* to sin; but it was not *necessary* for him to sin. When he had the desire to eat the forbidden fruit, it was not necessary for him to comply with it. He might have chosen contrary to that desire, and in compliance with the command of God, if such had been his pleasure; for he was perfectly free so to do. Though the essential imperfection of his nature necessarily brought him into the critical position of trial, between his own desire and the command of God, yet it laid upon him no neces-

sity to yield to the desire in disobedience to the command. His imperfection made him liable to sin, and thus his sin became possible; and from this possibility it actually occurred.

Dr. Tulloch asserts, however, that if the theory is understood "as only placing the possibility of sin in this imperfection," it cannot have "any title to be considered a theory of the origin of evil." But, of this, his bare assertion is all the evidence which he is pleased to afford. And on subjects of this kind we have always been in the habit of thinking that a mere assertion is very slender proof of the thing asserted. For, how easy it is to make the contrary assertion, and then the one having cancelled the other, nothing remains.

Though creatural imperfection only makes sin possible, by rendering the creature liable to sin, yet may it still be a satisfactory theory of the origin of evil. Imperfection may be the cause of moral evil, though it should not of necessity produce that effect. The efficiency of a cause may be conditional. And if the cause be not accompanied by its essential conditions, it will then not produce its legitimate effects. We hear the sound of a bell, and the movement or tolling of the bell is the cause of the sound. But this cause would not produce the effect without being accompanied by certain conditions. The bell must consist of a vibratory substance, and there must be a medium of sound susceptible of undulatory motion, such as air or water, and without these the tolling would make no sound—the cause would produce no effect. The cause acts through its essential conditions. In the dawn of the morning we are cheered by the light of the sun, long before the sun appears



above the horizon. The sun is the cause of the light enjoyed, but were there no atmosphere the cause would not produce this effect; there would be no light upon the earth till the sun had actually risen above the horizon, and thrown its rays down upon the objects below. The cause acts only through the essential conditions of its efficiency. And creatural imperfection, the cause of moral evil, is like other causes in this respect, it produces its effect only in connection with the essential conditions of its efficiency; and that is, through the exercise of the creature's free-will. When that free-will concurs with the wrong desire resulting from imperfection, then the effect is produced. But without this concurrence of the will the cause cannot produce its effect. The concurrent action of the will is essential to the efficiency of the cause. And in this respect the cause of moral evil is just like other causes, it produces its effects only when accompanied by its essential conditions. The mere existence of a cause, or what would be a cause, does not make it necessary that its effects must be produced. A spark of fire would be an adequate cause of the conflagration of a city, but though the spark exists it is not a matter of necessity that a city be consumed. The effect does not result from the existence of the spark, it must be accompanied by certain conditions before the effect is produced. And so with creatural imperfection as the cause of moral evil; its existence does not make the effect necessary, and yet it is an adequate cause of the evil, though it has to be accompanied by the action of the will of the free agent.

And it is thus evident that though the essential imperfection of the creature is the cause of his sin, yet it

is a cause over which he has entire control. It is in his own power to prevent it from producing its legitimate effects, because its effects depend upon his own choice. It is in subjection to *his will*, and therefore he is responsible for the effects it may produce. The creature is endowed by his Creator with the faculty of free-will; and thus he is qualified, and as it were constituted sentinel to guard against the erratic incursions of the creature's imperfection upon the claims of the Creator. And hence, if the will of the creature accedes to any invasion of the Creator's rights he is guilty, though that invasion originated in the essential imperfection of his own nature, because by the endowment of free-will he has been empowered and appointed to guard against this very thing. The Lord endowed Adam with this faculty of free-will, and put the essential imperfection of his nature in subjection to it, and thus fully fitted and appointed him to be the keeper and sentinel of his own fallibility, or creatural imperfection, and left him to the freedom of his own will. And when that imperfection revealed itself in the form of a desire craving what was forbidden, Adam ought to have denied its indulgence. He might, had he pleased, but he yielded to the desire, and thus the cause produced its legitimate effect. Through the voluntary action of his will, sin was produced by creatural imperfection as the originating cause. "He was led away of his own desire and enticed. And then when desire had conceived it brought forth sin, and sin being finished or completed it brought forth death."

Another objection urged at some length is the following:—"And if necessary in its origin, sin, according to

this theory, must be no less eternal in its duration; inasmuch as the creature can never be absolutely perfect, sin can never wholly disappear." This objection also is urged against a theory which makes sin to consist in the essential imperfection of the creature; and which, therefore, makes sin "necessary in its origin." For as the essential imperfection of the creature must exist, so this being sin, it must exist: and as this imperfection can never be removed, so sin can never disappear. But we have shown that the essential imperfection of the creature is not moral evil: and also, that though this imperfection is a *sufficient* cause, yet it is not a *necessary* cause of sin. And hence, the objection does not lie against the views we maintain.

The origin or cause of sin is in the creature himself. He is fallible in consequence of the imperfection which is inseparable from him as a creature. But though he is thus fallible, he cannot fall but through the action of his own free will; his fall is the result of his own voluntary choice. But the cause of all his sinful actions is in himself, and from himself. And the foreordaining of these actions, is only determining what the effects produced by the cause shall be, instead of leaving them indeterminate, without either certainty or limit.

And the immediate cause of good actions is also in the creature, but not *from* the creature; it comes from God. The Creator forms the creature with a holy nature, and this is the immediate cause in him of whatever good he may perform. And when the creature by his sin destroys the holiness of his own nature, there is in himself no power to restore it. He is then a sinner, and, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

not one." The restoration of his holy nature can be effected only by the creative power of God. There cannot be in a creature, either fallen or unfallen, any power to give to himself a holy nature. The holy nature of a creature is a thing of creation, just as much as his existence—it is a thing which is *created*, and has not, nor can have, existence in any other way. And hence, no creature, angel nor man, fallen nor unfallen, has power to produce it. It is the work of God. And accordingly fallen creatures, in whom it is restored, are said to be, and are, "created anew," the "workmanship" of God, "new creatures," "renewed in the spirit of their mind," "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" and also, "born of the Spirit." So that in all cases, though the cause of the foreordained good actions of man is in himself, yet it has its origin in God, and comes from God. But the immediate cause of the foreordained evil actions of man, has its origin in himself, and comes from himself. And hence, though both classes of acts are decreed, yet God does not sustain the same relation to both, nor has he the same agency in their performance. The cause of the evil act is from the creature; the cause of the good act is from God.

## CHAPTER V.

THERE is much in the Word of God confirmatory of the views which have been advanced in relation to the creatural imperfection or fallibility of man, as being the source of his degeneracy and now wretched condition; and much conspiring to the belief that the Lord has viewed man in this light, and has dealt with him on the ground of this imperfection which pertains to him as a creature, from which no created being can be exempt, and which, if it wrought the ruin of the race in the person of Adam, would certainly work the ruin of each individual of the race, if each one had his probation in his own person.

It is manifest to all that the human race is fallen; that men are degenerate and sinful. And the Scriptures teach that they are so even by nature; that they are "conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity." So that a corrupt nature is inherited by children from their parents, and this degeneracy and corruption had their rise in the defection and apostasy of the first of the race. The degeneracy of man is universal, and in attempting to trace it to its origin, it always leads to the first of the race as the source of the evil. And both Scripture and reason teach that the whole race have their character and standing, moral and legal, from the conduct, and



character, and nature of him from whom they have sprung. By his act of disobedience he corrupted his own nature, his fallible nature became a fallen nature, his corruptible nature became a corrupted nature, and his fallen and corrupted nature must be transmitted to his offspring. His nature was morally corrupt, and no other nature could be transmitted to his descendants. And so the Bible assures us that "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image." A nature morally pure could not proceed from a nature morally corrupt. The moral nature of Adam's natural posterity must have the same moral image as the nature from which it springs.

And it would be difficult to understand how a morally depraved nature could be an *innocent* nature. Adam's nature became corrupt and *guilty* at the same time, and by the same act; and this same nature he transmitted to his posterity, which is a guilty and depraved nature. And it would follow from this that all his descendants are involved in his guilt, as well as in his depravity. And it would thus appear that he incurred condemnation, not only for himself, but for all his posterity, as well as transmitted to them a corrupted nature. All who spring from him, by natural generation, are not only sharers in his depravity, but also sharers in his guilt. And it may not be easy to see how it could be otherwise. Will not the offspring of Adam be partakers of his depraved nature? And how a depraved nature could be innocent and free from guilt is hard to understand. We can easily perceive how all mankind could sin in Adam and fall with him into a depraved and guilty condition; but how they could avoid being

involved in his depravity and guilt is beyond our comprehension. When they are his natural descendants, how could their nature be different from the nature of him from whom they spring? And when they have his corrupt and sinful nature, it is hard to understand how they could be innocent and free from guilt.

When it is assumed that, in the nature of things, Adam's depraved nature must be transmitted to his offspring, it might be supposed that the regenerated nature of a man who has been renewed by divine grace must also be transmitted to his offspring. But the cases are not analogous. A man's depraved nature is his own; it has not come to him from any foreign source. It is his own creatural imperfection morally vitiated by his own disobedience. And hence, it is entirely man's own nature, what belongs to him as a creature fallen and degenerate. And being thus proper and common to man as such, it must be transmitted through the race. But it is not so with regenerating and saving grace. It does not belong to man as such at all. It constitutes no part of his nature, either as a creature or what he becomes by his own conduct. It is an element entirely foreign to his nature, and comes to him from another source. And hence, not being properly a part of his nature, nor having its origin in himself, when it does not belong to the nature of man, it cannot be transmitted by a man to his offspring. Nothing can be transmitted but what belongs to man's own nature, having its origin in himself. And we thus see why it is that though a man's corrupt nature must be transmitted to his offspring, yet his gracious nature must not.

It would seem, indeed, that, in consequence of the

whole human family descending from one, in the nature of things, the descendants of that one must, in their moral nature and legal standing, be the same as he was from whom they descended. And as we cannot see how Adam's posterity could be free from his depravity and guilt, so the Scriptures assure us that they are not free. They teach that the divine plan was to have Adam and his posterity identified in their probation, having it together, at the same time, in the same circumstances, in the person of one individual, even the progenitor of the race. And according to this arrangement, Adam was appointed the covenant-head and representative of the rest of the human race. This means that he was appointed to act for them, so that they were either to stand with him or fall with him. In other words, they were to be treated on account of his conduct, just as though it had been their own. And it was their own in that sense in which the doings of a representative are the doings of those whom he represents. So that the probation through which Adam passed was not only for himself, but for all his natural posterity. Hence they all had their trial or probation in him, instead of each one having it personally for himself. And, accordingly, when he sinned they all sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

This part of the divine arrangement is clearly taught in the word of God. In the Epistle to the Romans it is written: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." This obviously means that all men sinned in that one man. For it says all are subject to death, because "all have sinned," *in the sin of the one man*, by

whom sin and death entered into the world. It says, all are subject to death, not because all *do* sin, but because all *have* sinned. That is, because the whole human family *have sinned already*, therefore they are subject to death. It does not mean that all men are led to commit sin in consequence of Adam's sin; for if this were the meaning, the language would be thus: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death *passes* upon all men for that all *do* sin." But it does not say, *death passes* upon all men, but that it *passed* upon all men; and it does not say that all men *do* sin, but that all men *sinned* or *have sinned* already. And hence, the sinning of all men referred to here, is already past. And the *all men* are the whole human family; so that not only those who have been, but also those who are yet to be, have already sinned. And there is no way, intelligible and scriptural, in which they can *have sinned*, except as represented by Adam, and having his sin reckoned to them as though it had been committed by themselves. And the apostle argues that all men sinned in Adam, from the *fact* that death reigned over all men from the time of Adam till the time of Moses, a period of about twenty-five hundred years, during which, men had no written law to violate. And to show that men did not die during that time for sinning against the law of their conscience, or the light of nature, he says, that "death reigned even over them that had not sinned, after the similitude of Adam's transgression"—who had not even the semblance of sinning as Adam did; that is, who did not sin personally at all; which was the case with infants and idiots. And from the fact that these were subject to death, he argues that they

had sinned in Adam. They died for sin, but not for sin committed by themselves in their own person, and therefore it must have been for sin committed by Adam. And he thus proves that all are subject to death on account of Adam's sin, and that therefore they all had sinned in him. His argument is twofold: From Adam to Moses, when men had no written law to violate, they yet suffered the penalty of a violated law, and hence, they must have violated it in that form in which it was given to Adam, and this they could do only by being implicated representatively with him in his sin. And as infants could not violate any law, and yet suffered the penalty of a violated law, they must have been represented by Adam in his violation of the law. And he thus proves that all sinned in the sin of the one man, by whom sin and death entered into the world. And the apostle asserts also, that "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And if all were condemned for that one offence, they must have been viewed as guilty of it, for this was treating them as though they had committed it themselves. And Adam must have acted for them in such capacity, that his sin was counted to them as their sin; because they are treated on account of it, just as though it were their own.

According to this covenant arrangement with Adam, he sustained such a relation to his posterity, that what he should do as their representative, was to be laid to their account. If he would not sin, then all his posterity were to be treated as righteous on account of what he did; and if he did sin, then all his posterity were to be treated as sinners on account of what he did. Adam's obedience would have established forever all his posterity



in holiness and happiness; and his disobedience involves them all in guilt and condemnation. Because he acted for them his sin is placed to their account, and they are thus exposed to the punishment incurred by his violation of the divine law. And hence, even infants are under sentence of condemnation for the transgression of the law of God, and are liable to all the dread consequences implied in the penalty of that law. They are involved in guilt and depravity; and exposed to all the miseries resulting from sin both in this life, and also in that which is to come. This is the deplorable condition in which the whole human family come into existence, in consequence of Adam's sin, and in virtue of that arrangement whereby he was constituted the federal head and representative of all his natural posterity. And thus the human family are "children of wrath" even by nature, and are "dead in trespasses and sins," utterly unable to deliver themselves out of this sad condition—born depraved, guilty, and corrupt; and hence, without any power to work a change in themselves, either in their nature, or their relation to the law; or to release themselves from that estate of sin and misery in which they have been involved.

Many, very many, utterly repudiate this doctrine. They deny that God ever made any such arrangement; and hold that it would be derogatory to the Divine character to suppose that he had. They maintain that it would be inconsistent with the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, for him to make any such arrangement—an arrangement by which the whole human family are involved in guilt, and without any ability to help themselves, and all for the sin of one man! Such an arrangement

they consider would be unjust, cruel, and unwise. But we hope to show that it is entirely free from all imputations of this kind.

But before entering upon the main argument, we may recur to what has been remarked already, namely, that it is difficult to see how any other arrangement could be made—to see how an arrangement could be made, by which Adam's posterity should not be partakers of Adam's nature. Because this is what is requisite, in order to obviate the necessity of the arrangement objected to. For this covenant arrangement involves nothing more than is implied in Adam's posterity being partakers of Adam's nature. If they be partakers of his sinful nature, they must be partakers of his sin and guilt; because they could not be partakers of his guilty and sinful nature without being partakers of his guilt and sin. When Adam sinned against God, he corrupted and made sinful his own nature. It is impossible that it should be otherwise. He could not sin against God without making his nature sinful and depraved. If sinning against God does not corrupt the nature of him who sins, nothing else can. And if Adam's nature was not made corrupt and sinful by his sin, then it was not made sinful at all. And if his nature was not made sinful by his sin, then he was a sinner without having a sinful nature, and without being sinful. But this is manifestly a contradiction; for being a sinner he must be sinful, and being sinful his nature must be sinful; for he could not be sinful with a sinless nature. By sinning against God, Adam's nature became sinful and guilty; and if his offspring should not be sinful and guilty, it would be contrary to the natural and established law of propagation, over the face of the

whole earth, in the kingdoms of nature, both vegetable and animal. For in relation to all that is propagated, the established law is, that everything brings forth after its kind—that the progeny must have the nature of that by which it is propagated—that the nature of the offspring cannot be different from that nature whence it springs. And Adam's nature being a sinful and guilty nature, the nature of his offspring must be the same. And so saith the Saviour, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." That which is born of corrupt and guilty human nature, can be nothing but corrupt and guilty human nature. And in order to have an arrangement by which Adam's posterity should not be partakers of Adam's sin and guilt, it would be necessary to contravene, in the case of man, the natural order of descent, which God has established throughout his wide creation, and to ordain that man's offspring should have a different nature from that by which it is propagated. And we do not deny that God could have so ordered it; but it would be contrary to his uniform mode of procedure; as there is no such anomaly found throughout all the multiplicity of his works. And it thus appears that the covenant arrangement by which Adam's posterity partake with him in his sin and guilt, is in accordance with the established order of nature. It corresponds precisely to the natural relation, and the results of the natural relation, subsisting between Adam and his offspring. And this should have great influence in reconciling men to it, as being that arrangement which is fit and proper; because it harmonizes with God's established order throughout creation; and is entirely consonant with every other part of the Divine procedure, as far as our observation extends.

And there is another light in which the equity and wisdom of the arrangement may be beheld. And it is that by it all the human race were put on an equal footing, when having their probation for blessedness. As all had their probation in the person of one individual, no one could have any advantage over another. They all had it at the same time, and in the same circumstances. And in this are beheld both the wisdom and equity of God.

But with the view which has been given of man's creatural character, the essential imperfection and fallibility which must necessarily be in him, we may easily show that the arrangement objected to, is altogether worthy of that God, who is infinite both in wisdom and benevolence. It is taken for granted that it is consistent with the character of God, to make man, and to make him a moral being accountable to his Maker, with his happiness suspended on the condition of obedience, and with misery as the result of disobedience; and to place him in a state of probation, in order to a fair trial, that he may, by his own voluntary conduct, either gain the reward, or incur the loss. For God to deal thus, we say, must be consistent with his character, because he has actually done so. Well now, if men are to be placed in a state of probation, with their happiness suspended on the condition of obedience, then the best arrangement which could be made for them was that ordained of God, in which Adam was to act for the whole race. Because, if there was any probability of any one of the race retaining his integrity and gaining the reward, that one was Adam. And if Adam failed to gain it for them all, there is not even the shadow of a probability that any

one of the race would gain it for himself. This arises from the fact that Adam was in far more favorable circumstances for yielding the required obedience, than it is possible for any other one of the race to be in. Look at the difference between the case of Adam and that of any one of his descendants. Adam, when created, was not a *child*, he was a *man* in the full exercise of his mental and moral powers. He could reason, and judge, and discriminate, and reflect upon the consequences of his conduct. There was no possibility, in his case, of the passions of his nature being ardent and strong, while his mental and moral powers were still feeble and inactive. Nor was he surrounded by multitudes of evil doers, enticing to sin by both precept and example. All that he was exposed to, in this way, was the influence of a single individual. And over against that he enjoyed the personal presence of the Lord himself. And from the mouth of the Lord present with him, he heard the command and the threatening. And then too, he was happy, and had everything he needed to make him happy; and he saw nothing but happiness around him. And besides, he was not required to do many things, *nor even to do anything*, in order to gain the reward. All that was required of him was simply to refrain from doing one single thing; and the doing of that one thing in no way essential to his real happiness; and therefore, to refrain, the very easiest thing imaginable. And to refrain from this one useless indulgence, was all that was required in order to secure the happiness of the whole human family. He was assailed by only this one solitary temptation; all he had to do was to resist this, and he was safe and all his posterity. And no doubt many would now say,



that if the terms of endless life were made as easy to them, they would exceedingly rejoice; and would certainly gain the reward. How easy it would be to refrain from one thing, when they had everything they needed in order to make them happy! Yes indeed, the terms are easy, exceedingly easy; and they are the very terms on which all men had their trial for eternal life. God gave them their probation in the person of Adam, upon terms so easy that they can scarcely conceive of anything easier, if they are put upon trial at all. And the mere fact that men would consider these terms easy, is their cordial admission that the Lord acted wisely and benevolently towards them, in appointing Adam to act as their federal head and representative; because in doing so, he made the terms of their salvation as easy as they possibly could be made, if salvation be put on the condition of obedience at all. And if Adam did not fulfil these easy terms, could any one of his descendants do better than he did? For, suppose they were born free from that guilt and depravity which result from his disobedience, would there not be in them all, the same creatural imperfection and fallibility which led him to transgress?

It is true indeed, that there is a kind of indefinite notion entertained, to the effect that the whole of man's imperfection and liability to sin, have resulted from the apostasy of Adam; and that his apostasy is the sole cause of man's frailty and fallibility. But this notion is certainly erroneous; because it would imply that the rest of the race were free from the creatural imperfection and fallibility, which were the cause of Adam's apostasy. But this essential weakness and fallibility

did not result from his fall, his fall resulted from them; hence, they were in him before he fell. They belonged to him as a created being; and so are they inseparable from the rest of the race, and would be in them all though they had not sinned and fell in Adam. Supposing he had not been their covenant head and representative, and they had borne none of the consequences of his sin, yet they certainly would be no less weak and fallible than he was. The liability of men to sin is not the consequence of their federal relation to Adam, or of Adam's apostasy, it is essential to them as created beings. Men are *depraved* in consequence of Adam's apostasy, but they are not *fallible* in consequence of that apostasy. It is a very erroneous notion, to suppose that if we had not been represented by Adam, and had not been depraved through his fall, then we would be free from imperfection and weakness, and not liable to run into error and transgression—that we would be in a state of safety—strong and wise, and in no danger of deviating from that course, which would certainly secure to us the reward of eternal life. Such a notion as this is very erroneous, and injurious too; for it leads us to suppose that if we were born free from depravity, we could certainly do better for ourselves than Adam did for us, as our representative, and to find fault with the divine arrangement whereby he was constituted such. All such thoughts should be banished from our minds. For if the creatural imperfection and weakness of Adam led him into transgression, they must be the same in us; and would undoubtedly lead us in the same way.

Some men seem to ascribe the whole of man's imperfection and liableness to sin, to the fall of Adam; be-

cause they represent the fall as the only source and ultimate origin of all sin and evil found among men. They never seem to think that the same sin and evil might prevail if Adam had not represented his posterity, and they in him had not become fallen and corrupt; taking it for granted that the whole race could not be sinners but for their covenant relationship with Adam. Hence, these men make the apostasy of Adam a matter of far more importance than the Bible does. The Bible dwells much upon the fact, that man is *depraved and prone to evil*; but does not dwell much upon the fact, that this depravity results from the fall of Adam. It states the fact, but does not often recur to it, nor dwell much upon it, as though it were a matter of much importance. Because the truth is, the whole race might be corrupt and depraved, if Adam had not been the covenant head thereof, and if his descendants had sustained no federal relation to him, and if it had been possible for them not to be involved in his guilt and sin. The only difference would be, that in infancy they would not be depraved, but as soon as arrived at the age of responsibility they would. For none of them would be in anything like as favorable circumstances as Adam was, and if he fell, then much more certainly would they.

Suppose Adam had not been the representative of his posterity, and his sin had brought guilt and depravity on none but himself, and each one of the human family were put upon his own probation, and each one's destiny depended on his own personal obedience to the divine law, could any one of them be found in as favorable circumstances for obeying that law as Adam was? Most assuredly not one. Take for instance Cain, the first of

his descendants; and suppose him born as free from sin as Adam was when created. His situation would have been far from as favorable for keeping the law of God as was that of Adam. As soon as he arrived at that age when he would be conscious of a difference between right and wrong, he would be liable to commit sin. And the probabilities that he would do so, are a hundred-fold greater than in the case of Adam. At his age the passions would be strong, while the mental and moral powers would be weak; and how easily and certainly must he yield to temptation, when Adam was overcome notwithstanding the perfection of his manhood? What could Cain in his boyhood realize of the nature and effects of sin, compared with the capability of Adam? And if the situation of the one did not save him from falling, much less could the situation of the other save him. And suppose his parents should warn him against sin, yet he would have the example of them both to lead him to its commission. And in his tender years this would be an irresistible influence, bearing on him constantly for evil. How could he but be led by the example of those whom he loved; and to imitate whom, is so pleasant, natural, and easy? Adam the *man*, was not thus exposed, and yet he sinned; how much less then the security of the *boy*, when assailed by such a powerful temptation? And that boy could not be influenced by the consideration, that the destiny of the whole race was connected with his conduct. And besides, during the whole period of his probation, say a lifetime, he would be assailed by ten thousand temptations of various kinds, arising from every quarter. And instead of having to resist temptation to the commission of only

one crime, he would have to resist temptation to an almost endless multitude of crimes. And is it not evident that both wisdom and goodness are manifest in the arrangement, by which Adam was appointed to act for him as his covenant head and representative? Because the opportunity of his obtaining the blessing in Adam, was a thousand fold better than his own opportunity could possibly be.

And in the case of Cain the circumstances would be the most favorable of any of the descendants of Adam, because he would be exposed to fewer temptations than any one else. For just as the race would multiply, so would the temptations multiply. As the ungodly race would increase, so would iniquity abound. Tempters would everywhere be present, and temptations would everywhere assail. And how then could it be possible for a mere *youth* to retain his integrity when the *man* Adam fell, in the comparatively easy position which he occupied? If the creatural imperfection of the one wrought his ruin, how much more certainly must it work the ruin of the other? And this creatural imperfection and fallibility being inseparable from all alike, it was evidently the exercise of both wisdom and goodness to appoint Adam the federal head and representative of the whole race. For if there was any chance or probability of any one of the race continuing in obedience, the advantages were unspeakably great in favor of Adam being that one. And hence, it was wise, benevolent, and praiseworthy, on the part of God, to make the arrangement whereby Adam was to act for all the rest; because, in doing so, he did the best for them that the nature of the case would admit; that is to say, if



man was to be placed in a state of probation at all, this arrangement was the most favorable for him which could possibly be made.

Some are inclined to complain that their situation is a hard one, if in consequence of Adam's sin they are born in depravity and condemnation, and hence unable to relieve or help themselves. They think there would be neither wisdom, nor goodness, nor even justice in this, and that they would be treated unrighteously by such an arrangement. But most obviously, if they cast blame anywhere, it should not be upon such an arrangement, because it is every way wise, and just, and good. And if blame be cast upon any one, it must be upon Adam himself. And yet we need not hesitate to say, that no one of his posterity would have done, in his place, any better than he did, or would do any better if left to act each one for himself. The creatural imperfection and fallibility of his nature led him to do wrong, and these same would produce the same effects in any one else, if not prevented by sovereign grace.

Suppose it had not been the divine plan that Adam should stand or fall for the whole race, would the condition of the race, or of a single individual of the race, be any better than it is? We may admit that one thing which now occurs would not then occur, and that is the death of infants. Death, being the wages of sin, would not be inflicted on any, till they had sinned themselves. But how long would *children* be without sin in the midst of a wicked and ungodly world, when Adam sinned in his position? We may safely say that their sinless life would scarcely extend beyond the age of moral responsibility. Almost with the very commencement of their

obligation to duty would their failure commence. And their very first failure would bring them into precisely the same condition in which they are in consequence of Adam's sin. And now, if any one was put upon trial for himself, would his condition be at all changed for the better? None would die in infancy; all would live to violate the law of God for themselves, but who would be benefited by this? And how could the condition of any be improved by such a plan as this? As the age of accountability differs in different individuals, so the commencement of crime would not be at precisely the same age in all, but from about three years old and upwards all would be personal transgressors, and the subjects of guilt, depravity, and death. And is it not evident that the condition of the race, or of a single individual of the race, would in no respect be changed for the better? The whole race, above the age of moral responsibility, would be just as they are, guilty and depraved, and dead in trespasses and sins, hating God and hating holiness, and utterly unable to do any thing to deliver themselves from this sad state of condemnation and death. The representation and apostasy of the race in Adam, does not render the condition of the race one particle worse than if they had not been so represented, and had not thus apostatized.

And if the race had not had their probation in Adam, we may notice one serious disadvantage, which would be the result. As none would die in infancy, all would live till they would personally transgress the law of God, and thus incur its curse and make themselves the subjects of perdition. Hence, that large portion of the human family, which now die in infancy, would live till they had

violated the law of God for themselves. And then, all the advantages which those dying in infancy undoubtedly have over personal, *impenitent* transgressors, would be lost. The Word of God does not require us to believe that any one is lost through Adam's sin, except those who in their own person persist in that disobedience which was commenced in the person of Adam. Personal transgressors, by their own sin, give their sanction to what Adam did in their name. And their disobedience is only a willful continuance of that disobedience which was commenced in the sin of Adam. And hence, they that perish, perish for their own sin commenced in Adam and continued by themselves. But those who die in infancy do not themselves continue the disobedience commenced in Adam, and by grace, we believe, are saved through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. We know if they were left to perish there would be no injustice done them, because they had a fair and easy probation in the person of Adam. But the general import of the Word of God seems to be that none are lost but personal offenders. And there is good reason to believe that all those who die in infancy, and never personally transgress, through the atoning blood of Christ, are found among the redeemed in heaven. But if all were to stand or fall for themselves, there would be none dying in infancy. And there would be no large portion of the human family, in relation to whom these very pleasing hopes could be entertained. Hence the arrangement which affords ground for these hopes, must be superior to an arrangement which would afford no such grounds. By the one a large class die in infancy, and we have good ground to believe are saved; by the other there

would be no such class, and hence no ground for any such hopes.

Now is it not perfectly manifest that the arrangement, which implies the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, has such superiority and excellence pertaining to it, as clearly evince it to be of God? It has all the marks of a divine arrangement. It is such as might be expected from a God who is infinite in wisdom and in goodness. For if men were to be placed in probation at all, the easiest and best way in which they could have that probation, was in the person of Adam. *One* man, instead of the risks of a countless multitude—and that one man, the best of the race—in the prime of his existence—happy himself, and all around him happy, and having all he needed to make him happy—not required *to do any thing*; but only to refrain from doing *one thing*; and that one thing having, of necessity, no strong hold upon his nature; and at perfect liberty to indulge all his other desires, if he would only abstain from the fruit of one single tree! Most assuredly did the Lord make the terms easy to the human family, when he placed them on probation for their immortality. And none of the race, no matter who they are or where they dwell, can ever complain that they had not a fair and easy trial to test their willingness to obey their Maker, and thus secure the blessing of everlasting life. All, in all ages, and in all lands, have had this fair and easy trial in the person of Adam, and if they have failed, the fault is their own. They have had their trial in the best of circumstances, and on the easiest terms, and the blame of the failure must rest on themselves. And hence, it is just in God to treat them now as a guilty and rebellious

race; for they refused to obey when obedience was put on as easy terms as it possibly could. And if God were to leave the whole race to perish in their apostasy, he could not be charged with the want of justice, or the want of wisdom, or the want of goodness in his dealings with them; because the arrangement which he made for their trial is characterized by all these. In justice and fairness, in wisdom and goodness, he dealt with the race, in appointing Adam to act for them as their representative, they having their probation in him; and as they have disobeyed, they are righteously condemned. And if any perish, heathen or not heathen, it will not be without having had a fair and easy trial, through which they might have escaped the curse, and obtained the blessing of eternal life.

Now it is on the ground that all have had this fair and easy trial in the person of Adam, and only on this ground, that we can really, fully, and fairly free the doctrine of the fall of man in Adam from the objections which are urged against it. It is implied in this doctrine, that by Adam's sin all his posterity are brought into a state of condemnation, depravity, and death. They lie under the guilt of sin, they are destitute of original righteousness, and their whole nature is corrupt. As the Scriptures say, they "are dead in trespasses and sins;" and "by nature children of wrath;" having "a carnal mind, which is enmity against God; not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." And the descendants of Adam being under the curse of the law, and dead in sin, it follows that they have no ability to recover themselves from their lost and ruined condition. Now, when all are thus born guilty and helpless through



their covenant relation with Adam, how can we vindicate that covenant arrangement, except on the ground that when this guilt and inability were incurred, all had a full, fair, and easy trial for their salvation? That trial has left them in a ruined and helpless condition; and if it cannot be vindicated on the ground of its fairness, it cannot be vindicated in any other way.

Some attempt to vindicate the Adamic arrangement by pointing to the fact that a Saviour has been provided. But it will not answer, to appeal to the appointment of a Saviour, in order to justify the arrangement with Adam. The appointment of a Saviour, or the arrangement with Christ, was not designed to be supplementary to the arrangement with Adam. It was not designed to make good any deficiency in that arrangement. We cannot appeal to the fact that there is a covenant of grace, in order to vindicate the covenant of works; because that would imply that there was something wrong or defective in the covenant of works. If the covenant of grace was necessary to make the covenant of works right and just, then the covenant of grace is miscalled; for it is not a covenant of *grace*, but a covenant of *justice*, being designed to make right what the other covenant had made wrong. But the covenant of grace is what is signified by its name, and hence not designed to supplement or vindicate the covenant of works. The covenant of works must stand or fall on its own merits. It must be shown to be right and good, without appealing to the provisions of the covenant of grace. It must be shown to be excellent if the covenant of grace had never been made; and that God would be just if he had dealt with the whole human race on the conditions of the covenant

of works alone. And we never could see the propriety of appealing to the fact that a Saviour has been provided in order to justify the covenant, through which the whole race is brought into condemnation by the sin of Adam.

Nor could we ever see, how the appointment of a Saviour, has at all changed for the better the ruined condition of one portion of the fallen race. This portion consists of two classes: those who never hear of the Saviour, and those who refuse to be saved by him. Certainly the condition of neither class is improved by the fact that there is a Saviour. And since the existence of a Saviour does not change their fallen condition, why appeal to it as though it did? When men, by the Fall, are so depraved that they cannot repent and believe, what advantage is it to them that there is a Saviour? And how does the fact that there is a Saviour, justify that arrangement which has rendered them unable to believe in him? If the first arrangement has made them unable to repent and believe, and the second does not remove this inability, then the second is no remedy for the evil entailed by the first, for it leaves them just as the first made them; the first made them sinful, and the second leaves them so. If all men had restored to them, by the grace of Christ, what they lost by the sin of Adam, then the appointment of a Saviour would be a remedy to all men for the ruins of the fall, but not otherwise. And it is evident that all men have not this restored to them. For if they had, then all men would be as free from sin as Adam was before he fell; and be in the same happy condition that he was; and enjoying the same access to God and communion with him that he had before he sinned. But all men are not in this condition; and hence, they have not

restored to them, by the grace of Christ, what they lost by the sin of Adam. When men, by the operation of the covenant of works, are made sinful, and this sinfulness is not removed by the covenant of grace, it is no remedy for the ruin sustained. In other words, if men are brought into such a condition by their connection with Adam, that they are unable to believe in the Saviour, then the appointment of the Saviour is no remedy for the evil they have sustained. There is grace in the Saviour; but if men by the fall are rendered unable to accept of it, then it is no restoration to them of what they lost in Adam. And hence, we cannot argue the justness of the first arrangement, on the ground that there is a second, when the second does not repair the losses of the first.

Take, for instance, the case of Judas; through the covenant of works he was rendered unable to repent and believe in the Saviour. Now the fact that there was a Saviour does not justify that arrangement by which Judas was made unable to accept of him. The provision of a Saviour in whom Judas was unable to believe, would rather tend to condemn the arrangement which brought this inability upon him. If the Saviour had removed this inability, and thus brought him to repent and believe, he would then have been to him a restorer of what he had lost by the fall. But as he did not do this, he left him where the fall had placed him, under the influence of his fallen nature, "dead in trespasses and sins." And it is thus evident, that the provision of a Saviour does not prove the Adamic arrangement to be a just one. Before it can be justified on the ground that there is grace provided, we must maintain that grace removes from all men

the inability entailed upon them by the Fall. But this cannot be maintained, because it is contrary to facts; for all men's depravity and unwillingness to believe have not been taken away. Else all men would be willing to believe, and would be believers; as it is nothing but their unwillingness that hinders them from being such. If their unwillingness was removed, they would all believe. And as their unwillingness to believe is not removed, then their native depravity is not removed, for this is the cause of their unwillingness. If man's native depravity be not the cause of his unwillingness to believe in the Saviour, what is the cause? There is no other cause, and there can be no other cause. Men love their irreligious ways, and dislike the service of Christ; and therefore they are unwilling to believe in him. But do not these feelings spring from the depravity of their nature? And as long as they have these feelings, the depravity of their nature has not been taken away. And hence, all who have these feelings, have the depravity of their fallen nature still in them; the effects of the fall are still there. And we thus see it to be a fact, that grace does not remove from all men their native depravity and consequent inability to believe in the Saviour. And who would imagine that the grace of Christ has removed from the Heathen world all the depravity which resulted from the fall of man in Adam? And as it is an undeniable fact, that the provisions of grace do not remove from all men the guilt and depravity entailed upon them by the fall, it is evident that these provisions cannot be appealed to, in proof of the justice of the arrangement by which these evils have been entailed.

And take the case of the Heathen. In consequence

of Adam's sin they are born in guilt and depravity, and they never hear of the Saviour, and consequently live and die in their iniquity. Is their fallen state in any way changed by the fact that there is a Saviour? The state in which they are in consequence of Adam's sin is an evil one, and the fact that there is a Saviour has not changed it at all; unless we take the anti-scriptural ground that they are saved without faith, and without the appointed means of salvation. And as they are not thus saved, it follows that their fallen state is not at all changed by the provision of a Saviour. And hence, we cannot justify their condemnation in Adam, on the ground that there is a Saviour, when they never hear of that Saviour, and are in no way benefited by him. Is it not obvious that, the justness of their condemnation in Adam, must be put on some other ground than this? For when they never hear of the Saviour, and their guilty state in Adam is not changed by him, his appointment can afford no kind of warrant for their condemnation in Adam. So that the fact that there is a plan of grace, does not in any way vindicate the other plan, by which they have been brought into their guilty state.

It seems rather strange that any who reject universal salvation, and deny that redeeming grace is bestowed upon all the descendants of Adam, or that it removes the inability of salvation caused by original sin, should nevertheless advocate the doctrine of original sin on the ground that grace has been provided. If grace redeemed all men from the evils of original sin, and restored them to that state in which they were before involved in that sin, then we might vindicate the doctrine on the ground of that grace, but not otherwise. The nature of this



vindication of original sin will be seen in a single sentence from the pen of Dr. Fleming, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, in his work entitled "*A Plea for the Ways of God to Man.*" He says: "And what clears the justice of God in making the children of Adam bear the iniquity of their father, is the provision which He hath made for their restoration to perfect happiness and eternal life." According to this, "the justice of God would not be clear," if he had not made provision for the restoration of all men "to perfect happiness and eternal life." God had to make this provision in order to act *justly* towards men. *Justice* required him to make it, and if he had not made this provision, he would not have been a just God. And it follows that his making this provision was not an act of *grace*, but merely an act of *justice*. What *justice* required him to do could not be any thing but an act of *justice*. What he must do in order to be *just* cannot be done in *grace*. And according to this writer there is no such thing as "the grace of God." The whole system of man's redemption is nothing but a system of *justice*—a plan devised to "clear the justice of God" in his dealings with men. If God had left the apostate race of men to perish in that rebellion which was commenced in Adam, then his justice would not be "clear;" that is, had he thus left them he would not be a just God. "*But God was so just* that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life!" This is evidently the nature of the gospel now to be proclaimed, according to the statement of this writer. And is it really a fact, in relation to all men, that "God hath made provision for

their restoration to perfect happiness and eternal life"? The doing of this, the writer says, is "what clears the justice of God in making the children of Adam bear the iniquity of their father." And if God has not done this, then his justice is not clear; that is, it is not clear that he is just. And is there any evidence that God has made this provision? Has God provided it for them, and yet not given it to them? If he has made provision for the perfect happiness and eternal life of all the children of Adam, why has he not bestowed it upon them? And since he has not bestowed it upon them, did he design to bestow it upon them? And if he designed to bestow it upon them, why has he failed? God says: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And if he designed that all the heathen who never heard of the Saviour should be restored to "perfect happiness," why has his design not been executed? Was it God's "counsel" and "pleasure" to restore all these heathen to "perfect happiness," and yet he has not done it? If so, his counsel does not stand, and he does not do all his pleasure. But this can by no means be admitted. And as he has not restored these heathen to "perfect happiness," we must believe that he never purposed or designed to do so. And if he never designed to do so, he never made any provision for doing so. God could not make provision for doing what he never designed to do. Is it not evidently impossible that God should make provision for doing, what he never designed to do? And as he never *designed* to restore these heathen to perfect happiness, he never made any provision for thus restoring them. The fact that they are not thus restored proves that God never designed that they

should, and that he never made any provision for their restoration. And if the making of this provision, be the only thing which "clears the justice of God in making the children of Adam bear the iniquity of their father," then that justice is far from being clear, because there is no evidence at all that God ever made any such provision. But we have very different and much more satisfactory grounds on which to clear the justice of God in this matter.

The covenant of works and its consequences must be vindicated on other grounds than that a Saviour has been provided. And the only proper ground of vindication is the excellence of the covenant itself. When it is characterized by wisdom, and justice, and benevolence, it needs the aid of no other plan to vindicate its propriety. And we have already seen that the arrangement, by which "the children of Adam bear the iniquity of their father," was a wise arrangement, a just arrangement, a benevolent arrangement; because by it all men have had a full, fair, and unspeakably easy trial for their everlasting happiness. The heathen, who now perish in their blindness, have all enjoyed the benefits of this full, fair, and easy trial. And if they are condemned, it is in consequence of their having disobeyed, when obedience was required of them in circumstances the most favorable, and upon terms as easy as they could possibly be made. If the heathen were to have a trial at all, we cannot conceive of easier terms than were afforded to them in the person of their father Adam. All the heathen stood in innocence and in happiness in the garden of Eden; and there it was that they brought upon themselves the sad condition in which they now are. And in Eden they all had the best pos-

sible opportunity of making themselves forever happy; but they abused it, and they now bear the consequences. Their wickedness now, is nothing but their continuance and persistence in that disobedience, which they commenced in the garden of Eden; and all their sufferings are nothing but the consequences of their sin now continued, but commenced in Eden, where they might easily have obeyed and been happy forever. And hence, it argues neither injustice nor the want of goodness in God to leave them now in their state of condemnation; because they are only where their own voluntary disobedience has placed them. The conditions on which eternal life was offered to Adam were amazingly easy; and when he refused to comply with these easy conditions, it would surely have been just in God to have left him to perish in his disobedience. But it is these same easy conditions which every individual of the human family has refused to comply with. And if it would have been just in God to leave Adam to perish, is it not equally just to leave any other one to perish? There can be no more want of goodness in the one case than in the other. We are apt to think that Adam in paradise had a better opportunity of obtaining eternal life, than falls to the lot of the heathen and many others; but this is an entire mistake. The heathen have enjoyed the very same advantages which Adam enjoyed—in him they stood, and in him they fell. And whatever were his advantages theirs have been the same. And whatever guilt he incurred by sinning, they incurred the same. And as their sin is the same and their guilt the same, what would have been right to lay upon Adam, cannot be wrong to lay upon them. If it would have been right in God to leave Adam,

to live and die, and perish in his guilt, it cannot be wrong in God to leave any other one in the same condition; since all are alike guilty of the same crime, and in the same way. If Adam deserved to die, for sinning against God, in the very favorable circumstances in which he did sin, then all deserve to die on the same account. If it would have been just to leave Adam to perish, on the same ground, it is just to leave all or any to perish. And hence no charge can be brought against God, if he leave the heathen or any portion of the guilty race to perish in their apostasy.

The Divine arrangement is excellent and admirable in all its parts. But without investigation and careful study it cannot be well understood. Truth does not always lie on the surface; we have sometimes to "dig for it as for hid treasure." And the want of a correct knowledge of the divine arrangement is a principal cause of many of the objections urged against it. Whenever we gain a proper view of its true character, many difficulties vanish, which would otherwise remain. And there is nothing so worthy of patient and laborious investigation, as the works and ways of God.

It is proper to remark too, that from what has passed under review, we ought to be prepared to concede, that the arrangement by which Adam was constituted our federal head and representative, was for us a wise and benevolent arrangement. And therefore we have no manner of cause to find fault with the doctrine of original sin, or with what is called the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; as these are a part of that arrangement, which is only wise, and just, and good. And we ought to feel that God did well for us in making that



arrangement, and be grateful for it; because by it he gave to us our probation for happiness on the most reasonable and easy terms possible. And we ought to feel assured that our condition would not be at all improved, had each one been left to stand or fall for himself. Because the same creatural imperfection which led Adam to transgress, would lead us all to transgress, and involve us all in the same condemnation which results from his disobedience. And as ruin and helplessness befall us in either case, it becomes us to call upon the Lord—to seek his assistance with all humility and diligence—to make him our help and our shield, and the rock of our salvation.

The light in which we have viewed the whole subject, and the representation given of it, are in perfect harmony with the practical teachings of the word of God. The tendency of both is, to teach and enforce the same important lesson: a lesson which man is very slow to learn, namely, *that he is entirely dependent upon his Creator*. We see that man is nothing but weakness in himself; whether fallen or unfallen. If such imperfection, weakness, and fallibility, belong to him in his state of innocence, how much more must they belong to him now in his fallen and depraved condition? If there was that in him then, which wrought his ruin, how much more certainly must there be in him now, that which would work the same? And if man in paradise, in his state of innocence, was such a being that he could not be saved without the aid of grace to uphold him, is it not the greatest folly to talk of him being saved now in any other manner? Grace alone could have prevented the inherent weakness of his *innocent* nature from work-

ing his destruction; and surely nothing else can now prevent the inherent weakness of his *depraved* nature from leading him to this same end? Man, in his innocence, was entirely dependent on his Maker to keep him right; and man, in his guilt, can surely not expect to be kept right by any other help. The creature man, in his *innocence*, could not trust in himself with safety, and much less should *fallen* man attempt to do this now. How manifest it is that "power belongeth unto God," and weakness unto man; and that, "blessed only is that man who maketh the Lord his trust!"

That the creature man should be dependent upon his Creator is just what he ought to be. He ought to be dependent upon him in all respects; and he ought always to feel that he is so, and rejoice in the fact, and give to God that glory which is his due, by trusting in him as his help. For it is the prerogative of God to uphold and preserve his creatures. And those who refuse to look to him, and trust in him, are attempting to rob God of his right: and are assuming to themselves the prerogatives of their Maker. And God will not suffer this with impunity. For, "Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm; and whose heart departeth from the Lord." It is obvious indeed, that a creature in any way independent of its Creator would be out of place in the universe of God. And those who attempt to throw off this dependence, as Adam did, will by sad experience learn their dependence, in bearing the bitter consequences of forsaking the Lord, and trusting in themselves. And in view of the relation sustained by created beings to Him who made them, it would be an utter incongruity that the creatures of God

should be, in any respect, independent of their Creator. And by the fall of man, and of angels, God has taught this lesson to his creatures, in an awfully solemn and impressive manner. God has taught them, in an unmistakable manner, that they are but creatures, and that the creature's safety is only in submitting to, and trusting in its Creator. He has taught them that HE is all, and has all; and that they have neither strength nor goodness, but what must come from him. The creature's place is to lean upon its Creator—man in his innocence should have trusted in his Maker; he should have lived by faith upon God; just as man, when restored to his favor, is to live by faith upon God; in order that God's strength may be perfected in his weakness.

The whole design of the gospel is to bring men implicitly to submit to the will of God, and to put their trust in him. By disobedience in Adam, exclusion from God fell upon the whole race. But by Christ's obedience, the way is now opened for men again to return and make their peace with God; that they may implicitly submit to his will, and put their entire trust in him for safety, making God their refuge and their strength in all time to come.

The place which the Bible assigns to man is the only place of safety, for such a weak and imperfect being as he is; and that is the place of entire dependence upon the Lord—"Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah. My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand it upholdeth me. Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I

wait all the day. O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait, I say, on the Lord."

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## CHAPTER VI.

WE have seen that God hath foreordained all things whatsoever comes to pass, and that this foreordination extends to all the doings of moral agents whether good or evil; and that nevertheless this foreordination is not the cause of evil, the cause being in the voluntary agent himself, and that the divine decree only bounds and regulates the evil of the agent, and limits its forthgoing instead of permitting it to go forth without control. We have traced this evil of the moral agent to the essential, creatural imperfection of his nature, showing that he cannot be other than fallible, just because he is a creature, and of necessity limited and imperfect in his essence and in all his operations, liable to return to nihility, and would so return if not upheld by the power of God, and in like manner liable to recede from the line of rectitude, and would so recede if not prevented by the grace of God. We have seen also that this imperfection is not the consequence of divine foreordination, but that it is so inseparable from created existences that they cannot exist without it, and that a decree could not change their character in this respect, unless a decree could annihilate the difference between a creature and the Creator himself. The creature is imperfect not because he was decreed to be so, but because he cannot be any thing else. His existence is condi-



tional, but his imperfection is not. The decree is the cause of his existence, but the decree is not the cause of his imperfection. His existence is optional with the Creator, but not so his imperfection. As to whether he shall exist or not there is room for choice, but as to whether he shall be imperfect or not there is no room for choice; if made at all he must be made imperfect; that is, having a limited existence. And this essential imperfection of created existence is the original and prolific source of the abounding evil throughout the universe of God.

Now it may be asked, why has God given existence to creatures, the essential imperfection of whose nature may sooner or later work out their own destruction?—could not God prevent this imperfection from producing these evil consequences?—and if he could, why has he suffered the sad effects which now actually abound?

Here, then, we have indeed a very grave question—why has God not prevented the existence of moral evil? why has he created moral agents liable to fall, and not prevented their fall? This is a question which naturally arises in every reflecting mind, but it is one confessedly attended with much difficulty, and to which various very unsatisfactory answers have been given. And it may not be easy for us to understand why it is that a God infinite in goodness, and infinite in wisdom and power, has not prevented the evil and the wretchedness which do actually abound; why a God infinite in wisdom, goodness, and power has established a moral system having so much wickedness, wretchedness, and woe connected with it; why he did not establish a system perfectly free from all sin and all sorrow.

But this difficulty is by no means peculiar to Calvinism; it rests with equal weight upon the opposite system. Because Arminianism acknowledges the omniscience and all the other attributes of God, it acknowledges that all things were present to the Divine mind from eternity; that he knew what would be the workings and results of the moral system which he intended to establish; that he knew all the evil which would arise in that system, and all the wretchedness and misery necessarily connected with it. Then why, knowing all this, did a God of infinite wisdom, goodness, and power establish such a system? When divine foreknowledge is admitted, it is just as difficult to reconcile the existing state of things with the character of God, as when we admit divine foreordination. If it seems irreconcilable with the character of God to decree the establishment of a system having so much evil connected with it, does it not seem equally irreconcilable with his character actually to establish such a system, knowing that all this evil would belong to it? If it is consistent with his character knowingly to do as he has done, then it is consistent with his character to decree to do it. If he has established a moral system knowing there would be much evil in it, then the nature of the case is not changed by supposing that he decreed to establish such a system. If it is right to give existence to the system, then it is right to decree its existence. It cannot be wrong to decree what it is right to do.

But it may be said that God's foreknowledge of evil in the system, does not make it inconsistent with his character to establish it, because his foreknowledge is not the cause of the evil foreknown, but his foreordination

of the system would be inconsistent with his character, because it would imply the foreordination of evil, and would then be the cause of the evil foreordained. But this is assuming what never has been proved, and what we deny, and what we have shown to be untrue. For we utterly deny that the foreordination of evil is the cause of evil. The foreordination of an evil act is no more the cause of that act than the foreknowledge of it would be. The evil which is in the moral agent is the cause, and the only cause, whether the act be foreknown or foreordained. An evil act which is foreknown or foreordained must certainly come to pass; the foreknowledge of it makes it just as certain as the foreordination of it, but neither is the cause of it. The foreordination of such an act is not the cause of it, the evil of the agent is the cause, while the decree has determined the channel through which the evil is to flow, instead of allowing it to flow indefinitely without any control. So that the foreordination of a system having evil in it, is just as reconcilable with the character of God, as is the establishing of such a system with the evil in it being foreknown.

It may be said, also, that if he foreordained a system having evil in it, then it was his own pleasure that it should be so. And he must be conceived of as voluntarily choosing that system with which the evil is connected, because he foreordained that system when he might have declined doing so, and might have foreordained another free from evil altogether. And this may indeed be true, but to reject foreordination will not at all relieve us of the difficulty, if we still admit divine foreknowledge, for then also we are obliged to refer the ex-

istence of the system to the sovereign pleasure of God. Being omniscient, he knew the system which he was about to establish. He knew it in all its parts, in all its workings, and in all its results. He knew all the evil which would be connected with it. And the establishment of such a system must be absolutely voluntary on his part. He might either establish it, or he might not. He chose to establish that system, however, knowing all the evil connected with it. And hence, the existence of the evil, and of the system, must be referred to the sovereign pleasure of God. And thus it is obvious that Arminianism labors under these difficulties just as much as Calvinism; and Calvinism no more needs to be relieved of them than Arminianism does. And all are equally interested in this apparently incomprehensible mystery—Why it is that under the administration of a Being infinite in wisdom, infinite in goodness, and infinite in power, there is so much evil, so much wickedness, and so much misery found. And our object is to investigate this confessedly difficult subject; and to ascertain, if possible, why it is that the Sovereign Ruler of all has not excluded moral evil from his universe—why he has permitted it to have a place in the moral system which he hath established.

There is an explanation presented by different writers under various modifications to the following effect: namely, that the omniscient Creator, having all possible systems present to his mind, chose and adopted that one which had less evil in it than any other. Every possible system necessarily had more or less evil connected with it, and he has chosen the one which had the least. If a system free from evil could have been devised and established, such a one he would have preferred; but none

such being possible, he chose and established the one which had less evil in it than any of the rest. And hence, the adoption of a system having evil connected with it, is not from choice but of necessity. And this, it is supposed, will account for the existing state of things, and reconcile it with the character of God. But though this explanation may have originated with Augustine, or the very learned and pious Leibnitz, and as an hypothesis was admired by the great Dr. Chalmers, it is far from being satisfactory, and is exceedingly objectionable. Because it represents the Divine Being as not having control of every possible system; and especially as not having entire control of the moral system which he has actually established. It represents him as desirous of having a system free from evil, but this was not in the compass of his power. It represents the evil as being in the system contrary to the will of the Almighty; it is there, though he wished it were not there. But this hypothesis clearly denies the omnipotence of God; because it denies that God has power to accomplish his own will. And some writers of the present day maintain that such is actually the case. They maintain that though God had been willing to establish a system free from moral evil, yet he had not ability to do so; and that moral evil does really exist even against the will of the Creator. \*One author teaches that "God could no more make a world of accountable beings, in which there would be no sin, than a watchmaker could construct a watch in which there would be no friction." He says that "God must have been obliged to adopt one of three alternatives:—1. To adopt the existing system of things, having virtue and holiness in it, together with

\* Professor Bird.



sin, which I believe was the best system He could adopt; or, 2. A worse system, or state of things; or, 3. No system at all." He says, "that the choice to be made was not between sin and no sin, but between a moral system, in which there would be holiness and sin, and no system at all. God's mind," he says, "as revealed in the Bible, proves amply that such must have been the real state of things. Does not the strong hatred which God manifests against sin, prove that he would have prevented it if he could? Can one believe God honest in the solemn declarations made against sin, and in the strong desires manifested for its extirpation, if he could really have prevented sin?" According to this doctrine, then, God was really not able to prevent sin. The "Professor" says, "that he would have prevented it if he could." It appears then that God endeavored with all his might to prevent sin, but he failed. And in proportion to his failure would be his disappointment; and in proportion to his disappointment must be his wretchedness. It is impossible for it to be otherwise. Any being disappointed must feel discomfort, and that, just in proportion to the greatness of his disappointment. And the aims and efforts of every being must be of a kind with his nature; if his nature be insignificant, his aims and efforts will be insignificant; if his nature be exalted, his aims and efforts will be exalted. But the nature of God is infinite, and his aims and efforts must be of a kind with his nature; hence his aims and efforts being infinite, when they are frustrated the disappointment must be infinite; and the wretchedness resulting infinite in its kind. And we thus see, that if the "Professor's" doctrine be true, the ever-blessed God must be infinitely

wretched! It is probable the Professor would not say that God has more power now than he had when "he would have prevented sin if he could;" and hence, he cannot prevent sin now although he would. What is the use then in praying to God against sin, since he has no power to prevent it? The prayers of Christians for themselves and others are the most consummate folly, if the Professor's doctrine be true. And besides, inasmuch as God could not and cannot prevent sin, when he would, what security is there that sin will not increase, extend, and prevail, until it spreads through the whole universe of God—sweeping through heaven itself, with all its direful desolation—upturning the throne of the Most High, and rendering wretched not only the ever-blessed God, but all his creatures too? According to this author's doctrine, there is really no security against all this, and Satan may prove to have the mastery at last.

This notion that God has not absolute control of all things is entirely heathenish; the same that the pagan philosophers and poets taught in relation to their gods. Their opinion was that the gods were controlled by fate—even as men were controlled by the gods—that the gods could no more have their will, than men could have theirs—that the gods often desired to have matters different from what they were, but they had to submit to the decisions of fate. And to say that "God would have prevented sin if he could," is to place him in precisely the same situation. This Professor's view harmonizes also in a very remarkable manner with that of the ancient Gnostics. They maintained that the Supreme God, in all his plans and operations, had of necessity to contend with an eternal principle of evil; betwixt him and it

there was a perpetual war; and by it he was prevented from accomplishing the good which he constantly intended. So that this Manichean theology seems to be almost identical with that of this writer.

By another writer\* of the same school this opinion is set forth as follows: "To say the power of God was adequate to have prevented man, as a free agent, from sinning, is a contradiction in terms." And if "the power of God" be inadequate to prevent a *free* agent from sinning, it is inadequate to prevent any agent from sinning; because no agent is capable of sinning but one that is free. And if the power of God be inadequate to prevent sin in those alone capable of sinning, it is obvious that it is not adequate to prevent sin at all. And it follows, that Omnipotence is no match for sin—sin must have the ascendancy, and Omnipotence submit to its control.

And there are others who hold this view, namely, that sin could not be prevented without infringing the liberty of the free agent. That is, if God should interfere in such a manner, as to prevent man from sinning, he would thereby destroy man's freedom of both choice and action. And therefore, that man's free agency may not be destroyed, the permission of sin becomes a matter of necessity, if a moral government be at all established. But this theory has nothing sufficient to sustain it. Because the assertion that God could not prevent man from sinning without destroying his freedom, does not seem in accordance with truth. It is true indeed, that man could not be prevented from sinning without saving him from sin. But he might be saved from sin without taking away his freedom of choice and action. Because,

without any coercion or infringement of his liberty, he might be so influenced that he would never choose to sin. Could not God so influence a man's heart that he would never choose to do wrong, and always choose to do right? Could he not put such a disposition in man as would lead him continually to choose what he knows to be right, and to refuse what he knows to be wrong? And would not the power of God be adequate to enable him always to know what is right and what is wrong? We think it cannot be denied that God could so enlighten a man's mind that he would always know what was sin; and always knowing what was sin, and always refusing to commit it, he would thus be prevented from sinning. And being thus guided always to refuse the wrong, and to choose the right, would not be destroying his freedom. He would be saved from sin, but he would still choose freely and act freely, though always choosing the right, and refusing the wrong. Were a man so enlightened and so well disposed, that he would always do right and never do wrong, must that man be considered as having lost his freedom? The excellence of his nature would prevent him from sinning, but his freedom would certainly not be destroyed. So far from it, it is his freedom which saves him from sinning; for it is refusing the evil and choosing the good, which saves him, but this choosing and refusing is the exercise of freedom. And when a man is so enlightened and so well disposed, that he will not and cannot choose to do wrong, surely his character as a moral agent does not then cease. His moral nature is not destroyed; it is not even impaired, but rather perfected. And hence, he is still a proper subject of moral government. His inability to choose to do wrong does

not destroy his accountability; he is still subject to the requirements of the divine law, and by that law he is still to regulate his conduct. And it follows, that his character as a free moral agent has not been destroyed.

If the want of ability to choose to do wrong destroys *free agency*, then the inhabitants of heaven are not free agents, for they are unable to choose to do evil. And if they be not free moral agents, they constitute no part of God's moral kingdom, nor are they subjects of his moral government. But it is admitted that they are both; and hence, their want of ability to choose to do wrong does not infringe their freedom, nor take away their character as moral agents.

If the want of ability to choose evil destroyed free agency, and released from accountability, then the want of ability to choose what is right must do the same. And accordingly, they that are so depraved that they cannot choose to do right, cease to be free agents, and are released from all responsibility. And then it would follow that Satan is not a free agent, nor responsible for what he does, because he has no ability whatever to choose what is good, he is so entirely depraved that he is utterly unable to choose the service of God. But we know that this inability to choose to do right has not destroyed his free agency, nor released him from accountability; he is still a proper subject of moral government, and amenable to the divine law. And of this his continual punishment for disobedience is indubitable evidence. And it is thus evident that neither the want of ability to choose evil, nor the want of ability to choose good, destroys free agency, nor releases from moral obligation. He that is so depraved that he cannot choose



to do right, is still a proper subject of moral government, and he that is so holy that he cannot choose to do wrong, is likewise the same; the free agency of neither is destroyed. And therefore the opinion cannot be admitted as correct, that God could not prevent sin without destroying the free agency of his creatures. For it is evident that he might so influence his creatures, as that they would always choose what is right, and refuse what is wrong. And thus sin would be prevented, and the creature's free agency by no means destroyed.

If God had so influenced the heart and mind of Eve, that she would have refused to yield to the temptation, would she have been less free after she was tempted than she was before? Certainly she would not: her free agency would not have been impaired, nor her accountability destroyed. And if her heart had been so influenced ever afterwards, as to preserve her from sinning, her free agency would certainly not have been thereby destroyed. She would still have acted freely in choosing the right, and refusing the wrong, and still been a proper subject of moral law and government. And if Adam had been so influenced also, his moral character and legal standing would have been the same, free from sin, a free moral agent accountable to God. And if all their posterity had been influenced in the same way, then the whole human family would always have chosen to do right, and refused to do wrong; and the whole race would have been sinless. But they would still have freely chosen and freely acted; and obviously would not have ceased to be the subjects of the government of God. Is it not evident then, that God could have pre-

vented moral evil without destroying the free agency of his creatures?

This opinion that God could not prevent sin without infringing the free agency of man, is the same objection which is urged against efficacious and saving grace. It is maintained that if God were to work upon the heart and mind of the sinner so as to beget in him repentance and faith, that this would be taking away his liberty of choice, and he would not be a free moral agent. But this doctrine is in conflict with fact, and with the teachings of the whole word of God. Because it is a fact that all the people of God who have repented and believed in the Redeemer are free agents, and accountable to the law of God. Everybody recognizes them as such: and the Bible everywhere addresses them as such. It warns, and exhorts, and urges them to the discharge of duty as free moral agents. When Saul of Tarsus became a follower of Jesus, he did not cease to be a free agent, nor was he released from accountability to God. And thus does he everywhere speak of his responsibility; and assures us even, that though he had preached to others, if he did not do his duty as a free moral agent, he might himself "be a castaway." And yet it was God who saved him from sin. He says: "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." And again he says, "By grace I am what I am." God wrought upon his heart and mind to save him from sin—to change him from a persecutor of Jesus, into a preacher of Jesus. But by doing so he did not interfere with his free agency, nor in any manner impair his accountability to God. He was just as free when engaged in the service

of Christ, as he had been before when he was opposing him. His enmity against Christ was taken away, but his freedom was not taken away. God changed his heart so that he loved the Saviour, but that did not take away his freedom. And the whole import of the word of God is, that believers are made such by the grace of God working in them a saving change. It says to believers, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"—"It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do"—"By grace ye are saved." But though they are thus changed by the power and grace of God, their moral freedom is not interfered with; and they are saved from sin without having their free agency destroyed. And we see that the doctrine is utterly unscriptural, that God could not prevent sin without destroying the moral freedom of his creatures. He prevents it in fallen man without destroying his free agency; and so with the same result he could have prevented it in man unfallen, had it been his pleasure so to do.

Another phase of this theory, is that adopted by Thompson, in his *Christian Theism*. His view is set forth in the following quotation—"If He have created man to be free, it is as little to be expected that He will interfere with his free agency to keep him from falling, as that he will suspend the law of gravitation to save the head of one who madly throws himself down a precipice. If He have determined eternally to endow a creature with the likeness of his own originating power, it is impossible that He can interfere to prevent that power from being abused."

It is obvious that if this theory had any foundation in

truth, it would be impossible for God to save any creature who is a free agent. If "it is impossible that He can interfere to prevent the power (of free-will) from being abused," then ability to save a sinner does not belong to God. For how else could he save them, than by making them willing "in the day of his power;" and thus preventing them from abusing their free-will? Men are not saved as furniture would be saved by drawing it out from a burning building, or as a piece of timber would be saved by dragging it forth from a flowing stream; but by inclining their will to submit to Christ in the gospel. We are expressly told that God "worketh in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." And this is certainly "interfering to prevent them from abusing their power" of free-will. And since it is a fact that God interferes to prevent fallen man from abusing the power of free-will, why might he not have interfered with man unfallen in like manner? If he may interfere to prevent the abuse of free-will in the one case, why not in the other? Did not God save from apostasy "the elect angels," by preventing the abuse of their free-will, when others were left to abuse it and fall? But the very idea is monstrous—that God should "determine eternally to endow" his creatures with a power over which he Himself was never to have any control!—and an "originating power" of evil, with which "it is impossible that He can interfere!" It is a wonderful conception in relation to the infinitely wise and Holy One, that he should endow his creatures with a power to do evil, and put it out of his own power to control it!—endow them with a power, over which he has no power! How glaringly absurd and unscriptural! It may be

maintained that God has endowed his creatures with the power of originating evil by the abuse of their free-will; but that he has "determined eternally" that it is impossible for him to interfere to prevent this abuse, is monstrous in the extreme.

But all these notions of God's inability to prevent sin, when placed in the light of divine truth, are found to be mere figments of the human mind, invented for the purpose of sustaining some system of error. For to say that God would prevent sin if he could, is certainly to deny his omnipotence. Because omnipotence implies ability to do all that there is a will to do. He that is not able to do what he wills to do is not almighty. And if God would have prevented sin but could not, then he is not almighty. But he said to Abram, "I am the Almighty God;" and hence, he could have prevented sin if he would. Because almightiness means nothing less than ability to do whatever there is a will to do. These writers tell us that the Lord did not prevent sin, because he could not. But the Bible says, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places." They tell us that the Lord did not do his pleasure, but the Bible tells us that he did; and we have no doubt the declaration of the Bible is true. And if the Lord has everywhere done his pleasure, then sin is not in the moral system which he hath established, though he willed it should not. It is not in it because he had no power to prevent it, but just because it was his pleasure not to prevent it. Nor is there in the whole Word of God a single intimation that God would have prevented sin, if he had had the power. But on the contrary, it everywhere leads us to



believe, that he could have prevented sin had it only been consistent with the end he had in view in creating all things.

Because God "manifests strong hatred against sin," is no evidence at all "that he would have prevented it if he could." It may be that he would not prevent sin though he could, just that there might be a possibility of "manifesting his strong hatred against it," and of thus revealing the holiness of his nature to his intelligent creation. Men do not always prevent what they dislike, though they have the power. Very often they suffer to occur what they hate and could prevent, not for sake of the occurrence itself, but for sake of the good which they know will result from it, or from the circumstances with which it is inseparably connected. And thus may God suffer the existence of sin, though he hates it, and could prevent it, not for its sake, but for sake of the good resulting from that condition of things from which sin is inseparable—good which could not be secured if sin did not exist. And we can readily believe that God is perfectly "honest in his solemn declarations against sin," though he did not prevent it, and yet had the power; and though from choice it has a place in the moral system which he hath established. He may give it place in the system, just in order that he may prove the *honesty* of "his solemn declarations against it." We think it may be very fully shown, that the honesty of God's solemn declarations against sin, could not be verified without the existence of sin. And if so, we see that good may result from sin's existence, or rather from that order of things of which sin is a part, which could not be secured without sin. And accordingly, for the

sake of that good, which results from a moral system having sin, and which could not be secured by a system without sin, God may have allowed it a place in the system which he hath established, though he both hates, and has ample power to prevent it.

It may readily be objected, what good can result from sin? Can good come out of evil? And it may be replied that no good comes out of sin; the good comes out of the system of which sin is a part. Sin, by itself, can yield no good; nor even in connection with any thing else does it yield any good. The good which comes from the system of which it is a part, does not come from sin; it comes from the system as a whole. But the system as a whole must have sin in it, or it would not be the system which it is; and therefore could not answer the end which it does. A system may have an evil thing in it, and yet as a whole may produce much good, and still the good does not come from the evil, but from the system of which the evil is a part. A medicinal prescription may have a deadly poison in it, and that prescription may effect much good. It is not the poison which effects the good; it is the prescription as a whole. And yet without the poison it would not be the same prescription, and could not effect the same good. And so sin may be essential to the adaptation of a system to the end intended, and yet itself produce none of the good resulting from that system. And hence, when it is asked, What good can sin produce? we answer, no good. Nor has it been permitted for the sake of any good resulting from itself, but only for sake of the good resulting from that system of which it is an indispensable part.

We may well inquire then, What is that good which

results from a mixed moral system, embracing both sin and holiness, and which could not result from a system embracing holiness alone; and which is of such vast importance that, for its sake God has been pleased to establish this mixed system, having sin and all its attendant evil consequences? For it is undoubtedly true that, *for the sake of some good*, God has established the present system of things, as it is, with both sin and holiness embraced. What is that good then? Is it possible for man to know it? This is a question concerning which much has been written; and a great deal of which affords no satisfaction.

Who are the gainers by the establishment of this mixed moral system? do the advantages accrue to creation? are the creatures of God profited by the existence of moral evil? is it on the whole advantageous to them that sin prevails with all its consequent wretchedness? does the good resulting from the existence of sin counterbalance to them all the evil which sin has brought upon them? This appears very doubtful; though many have undertaken to make it so appear; but all their efforts are nothing but a miserable failure. The learned have said a great deal about the necessity of evil in order to the happiness of created beings. But who believes them—that creatures could not be happy without being unhappy?—“that without the *contingency* of pain, we could not have had the *fact* of pleasure”? (*Tulloch.*) And though it be admitted that the “organism” which is “essential to pleasure,” must also be “susceptible of pain;” who will believe that this pain must necessarily be experienced? Though the organism may be susceptible of pain, could not the Creator save it from ever feeling that

pain of which it is susceptible? Any one can see that the susceptibility of pain does not make pain necessary. We are always susceptible of pain, but not always the subjects of it; showing that the *necessity* of pain does not result from the *susceptibility* of it. If there were any necessary connection between the two, we must be in pain all the time; because we are always susceptible thereof. Does the human soul, which is susceptible of so much anguish, lose that susceptibility when it passes into heaven? Is it not the same soul then that it was before it entered there? But it shall never feel pain. And why? Is it because it is incapable of feeling it, or because it is saved from pain, though its susceptibility is the same it ever was? According to the reasoning, the soul in heaven must be susceptible of pain, just because it is *susceptible of pleasure*, and yet it will never experience any pain. And thus we see again that the susceptibility of pain does not make its existence necessary. And so upon earth there might be all the conditions and susceptibilities of both pain and pleasure, without the existence of any pain.

And we are told by the same author, that suffering is essential to happiness, because our happiness is heightened by relief from suffering—"that while our organism cannot resist the contact of the latter, it yet often turns into a mean of higher pleasure. The temporary suffering is transmuted into a sweeter joy." But who would not rather dispense with the "sweeter joy," in order to avoid the previous suffering? Has there ever yet been a case of suffering, with the "sweeter joy," when the sufferer wished it repeated, in order to heighten his happiness? Did ever any one who suffered the agonies of

tooth-ache feel thankful that he had endured them, on account of the "sweeter joy" he experienced when they had ceased? or wished to endure them a second time in order to make him more happy? Would not such a sufferer consider him a very wise man, who would say that it would be well if he had to suffer these agonies over again in order to increase his happiness? Is it not a fact that every one would rather dispense with both the suffering and the "sweeter joy?" And it is thus the united sentiment of all men, that there would be more happiness without them, and that, hence, human happiness is abridged by them instead of augmented. All such reasoning is at variance with the common sense and common experience of men; and utterly fails to make it appear that happiness is *increased* by the *existence of evil*.

And though "in reviewing the phenomena of creation, we are to bear in mind that we only see part of a great plan in progress, and that if we could see the whole plan in its extended development, many things that now seem to us exceptional and contradictory might lose this character altogether, and even expand into special means of advance in the ever-enlarging display of the divine beneficence," yet would it not be made apparent that evil and suffering are essential to happiness. If "the ever-enlarging display of the divine beneficence" does not finally restore all creatures to perfect happiness, how can the wisdom or goodness of the plan be witnessed in the case of those still wretched? If a portion of creation be left in sin and misery, no "extended development" of the plan can ever make it evident that the plan contemplated especially their happiness, and that it



has been fulfilled. And even supposing Universalism true, and all restored to perfect happiness, would not wisdom and goodness be much more conspicuous in the development of a plan which would have excluded all sin and misery? But evidently this surmising that the development of the plan may clear it of its difficulties is only an attempt to remove these difficulties far distant, into the remote future, and thus by putting them away out of sight, as it were, to relieve the subject of their pressure. And the frequent reference to our ignorance, and "the limitation of our faculties," and inability to comprehend things mysterious, is reasoning of the same kind, and is just an acknowledgment on the part of these writers that they are unable to reconcile the actual state of things with the assumption that the communication of happiness was the chief design of creation. For notwithstanding "the limitation of our faculties," and inability to comprehend mysteries, we can surely understand that misery is not happiness, and that if the chief design of creation was the communication of happiness, the design has thus far failed, and may, and likely will, forever fail.

And after all that is said concerning the peculiar blessedness of the redeemed, may it not well be asked, might they not have been perfectly happy if they never had fallen? The angels who never fell are perfectly happy, and if men had remained sinless, might they not have been perfectly happy also? *Redemption from sin*, then, does not seem essential to the perfect happiness of creatures; hence, they might have been perfectly happy if sin never had existed. And thus it would appear that both the redeemed and the unfallen would have

been perfectly happy without the existence of sin. And besides, had there been no sin, the multitudes of the lost, both angels and men, would have been exempt from eternal wretchedness and woe. Had there been no sin, there would have been no suffering, all would have been perfectly happy. The evils, then, which result from sin to the creatures of God, seem to be to them a positive loss, and a loss not compensated by the good resulting to *them* from the existence of sin. Even admitting that the happiness of the unfallen and the redeemed is augmented in consequence of sin, yet we cannot see how their increased happiness makes any compensation to the lost for the misery they endure in consequence of sin. Their wretchedness is not diminished by the increased happiness of the happy; but, on the contrary, rather augmented. It will be no relief or comfort to the lost, in the abodes of endless despair, to know that the cause of all their misery is so overruled, that greater joy fills every bosom in the happy world of the redeemed. And taking the creatures of God as a whole, it is very difficult to see how good has resulted to them in consequence of sin. It would seem that it would have been better for *them* if there had been no sin. Had there been no sin, then all would have been perfectly happy, and to no one of them would there have been any thing wanting. Would not this have been better for *them*, as a whole, than that the happiness of one part of them should be increased through the loss of the happiness of the other part? And certainly it never yet has been made apparent, and we are satisfied it never can, by man's ingenuity, that a greater amount of good is secured to the creatures of God, by the existence of moral evil, than

could have been secured to them without it. Nor is there reason to believe that the Lord's principal design in the permission of sin was to secure the greatest possible measure of good to his creatures. When it is assumed that this was his principal design, it is then impossible to show that the design is, or ever will be, executed.

Very many writers on this and kindred subjects, have taken it for granted, that the chief end the Lord had in view, in all that he has done, was the communication of happiness to others; he created others that his happiness might be diffused abroad in them, and thus to make them happy was the design of their creation. And we are satisfied that this is a grand mistake. And no doubt from this mistake arise insuperable difficulties, when attempting to reconcile the actual state of things with this supposed design of the Lord, in creating and governing man and other moral beings. And this same view we find to be entertained among people generally. They take it for granted that the design of their creation was their own happiness, and that all that has been made was made just for their convenience and advantage. And hence, they are sometimes led to question the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, because they find creatures existing which are not only useless to them, but positively injurious. And accordingly we often hear the interrogatory, What is the use of this insect? or that reptile? or some pernicious weed? Just as though the grand and special design of creation was the happiness of man, instead of the glory of God. It is not strange, however, that this view should be so common, when we consider the exceeding selfishness of man,

and the number and respectability of the writers by whom it has been maintained. We may mention some in whose writings we have found it either maintained or conceded—Paley, Butler, Schmucker, Day, Tulloch, Fleming; and Dr. Day, in his *Examination of Edwards on the Will*, speaks of this view as being generally entertained. But though this view has such an array of human authority for its support, we are fully persuaded that it is unsupported by the Word of God. And we doubt not the correct view is, that God hath made, and arranged, and manages all things in the best possible manner for the purpose of manifesting and securing the honor and glory of his own Great Name, instead of having it for his main design to secure the greatest possible measure of happiness to his creatures. The happiness of his creatures is not disregarded, but it must be sought and secured in subordination to the glory of God. He himself must be the paramount and ultimate object of all he does; as it is written, “The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”

And here the inquiry will naturally arise, Is it consistent with the Divine character for him to make himself the chief end and object of all he does?—is it in accordance with the benevolent and exalted character of the Deity, that he should act in all things especially for himself? A sufficient answer to this is, that the Scriptures uniformly represent him as thus acting; and whatever he does is consistent with his character. If he does all things for his own glory, then we are certain that it is consistent with his character for him to do so. But does not this lead us to conceive of the Lord as supremely

selfish? When a man acts for himself, as though he disregarded the interests of others, is he not justly esteemed as hatefully selfish, and as acting in a very unworthy manner? And how can it be viewed as becoming on the part of God, that he should act in this same manner? If it be wrong in man to make self the chief end of all he does, how can it be proper in God to do this? If a certain course of conduct on the part of man would be stigmatized as culpable selfishness, how can a similar course of conduct be viewed as just and proper on the part of God? It is doubtless because there is something which makes this course of conduct different in man from what it is in God. And it is just the difference which exists between man and God. A man may have his equal, but God can have no equal. When a man is pursuing his own interests, there may be others who have as good claims as he has, and their claims ought not to be disregarded, when their interests come into competition with his. When a man is ruled by selfishness, he infringes the rights of others, *who are as worthy as himself*. Selfishness on the part of man is a violation of rights. It always leads directly or indirectly to injustice towards others. Selfishness may not affect any individual directly, while it may affect society at large, in a serious manner, and be thus doing injustice to many. Hence, no man ought to pursue his own interests, regardless of the claims of others; for they may be as worthy as he is; and their rights as good as his rights; and to trample on their rights is injustice. And thus it is evident that selfishness on the part of man is not only a violation of the law of love, but it is also a violation of the law of equity. The great and all-comprehensive



law is, "Render therefore to all their dues." Men being each others equals, there are dues to be rendered to each other; and no one has a right to claim all for himself. But it is not so with God, He has no equal; and hence, there is none who can have the same claims that he has. The claims of none can come in conflict with his claims. There can be no competition between his rights and the rights of his creatures; because his rights are infinite, and theirs are every way limited. He is every way worthy and deserving; and hence, none can have the same claim to be served, which he has. He is infinitely more excellent than all others. He is infinitely more amiable and lovely than all others. He is infinitely more just and holy, and wise, and good, than all others. And hence, he must be infinitely more deserving than all others. And in justice then, his interests must be sought in preference to those of all others. And therefore, in justice to himself, he must make his own glory the chief end of all he does; because he cannot but render to himself what is his due. And being supreme in his worthiness, he must be supreme in his claims: and these claims can be met only by doing all things for himself. If he did not have supreme regard to his own claims, he would not act agreeably to right and justice. *Justice*, then, requires that God should do all things for his own glory; and that he should do whatever is *most* for his own glory. His worthiness and his claims are infinite; hence, all that can be done to meet these claims, *justice* requires to be performed. And whatever is most for the glory of God, *that*, by the attributes of his own righteous nature, he is bound to have executed. It is impossible for God to

overlook his own claims, for the sake of the claims of others. The eternal principles of justice, that is, the holy and divine principles of his own nature, require him to do all that he does, and we may say, all that he can do, for the exaltation and glory of that Being, who alone is infinite in excellence and worth. It is nothing of the nature of selfishness then, for God to make himself the chief end of all he does; it is only acting agreeably to the infinitely holy and righteous principles of the divine nature; it is only rendering to God his due; and were God not to do this, he would cease to be just. And therefore, he cannot forbear to do whatsoever will be most for his own glory.

Men are inclined to forget that God has claims, which cannot be disregarded even on the part of God himself. They are inclined to forget, that in virtue of his infinitely worthy nature and character, his own claims, in his estimation, must overbalance the claims of all others; and that in *justice* these claims must be satisfied; and this too, even though the permission of evil, and consequent loss of happiness to others should be involved; but not by infringing the rights of others, nor by doing any injustice to them, but only by suffering them to pursue their own chosen way. Men are inclined to believe that benevolence towards his creatures ought to be the only moving cause with God in all he does. And this belief is the natural consequence of the erroneous opinion that the chief end of creation was the diffusion of happiness. If God gave existence to beings just for the purpose of communicating to them happiness, then, of course, in all his dealings with them, he must be ruled by this purpose. And this brings after it the unsuccessful effort to show

that all things, as they actually do exist, have the best adaptation to make the creatures of God happy. And to be saved from this fruitless labor, and the error out of which it grows, it will have to be admitted that while God is benevolent to his creatures, he must also be ruled by justice towards himself. For God is just as well as benevolent. But through the selfishness of fallen man there is in him a strong tendency to forget, or overlook, or even deny that Justice is an essential attribute of the Divine Being. But God cannot cease to be just for the sake of being benevolent; he must do justice to himself, while he is benevolent to others. And benevolence to others can never be of more importance in the estimation of the Divine Being, than justice to himself. And if this justice to himself sets a limit to the exercise of benevolence, this limit can never be removed at the sacrifice of justice. God cannot cease to be just, in order to make others happy. He cannot deny to himself what is his due, on account of others. He cannot rob God, that others may be profited. And hence, justice to himself requires God to do whatever will be most for the advancement of his own glory. And if it be most for the advancement of his glory to establish a moral system, in which moral evil is to have a place, then justice to himself requires that such a system shall be established. And it thus appears that it is only justice on the part of God to establish such a system. His own indispensable claims require it, and these must be complied with, even though it should require the limitation of the exercise of his benevolence. If the claims of the Godhead had been disregarded, benevolence might have been exercised to the exclusion of all sin and all suffering. And if the

Creator had had in view no other object than the happiness of created beings, no doubt a moral system would have been established, without either sin or suffering having a place. If it had been the Creator's design to establish such a system, it is impossible to conceive of any thing to prevent him, if we admit that he is that Omniscient and Almighty Being revealed in the Bible. For "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." And "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven, in the earth, in the sea, and in all deep places." We must believe then, that if the happiness of the entire universe had been God's chief design in creating and governing, it would have been secured. And as this has not been secured, we must infer that it was not his chief design. And if it was not his chief design, what else than the higher claims of the Infinitely Worthy One, could prevent it from being so? Had a system been established in which moral evil was not permitted, God would not be glorified as he might, and as he ought; and therefore, injustice would have been done to him. And it follows, that a moral system, which would imply injustice on the part of God towards himself, it was impossible for him to establish. And we thus find a sufficient reason for the actual state of things as they now exist.

This subject is one of vast and vital importance—the claims of the Almighty and Glorious God. On this subject man ought to meditate much, in order that he may have some proper conception of what God is, and what he is entitled to, and the service which ought to be rendered to him. If we have not proper views of the paramount nature of the Divine claims, we cannot be im-

pressed as we ought with a due sense of our obligations to him; for not understanding what he is, we cannot understand what we ourselves ought to be. If we are destitute of correct views of God, suitable feelings towards him cannot be expected. And we ought ever to remember that all worth and excellence centre in him; that his claims are boundless, and ours, in comparison, "less than nothing and vanity." And hence, when his will comes in contact with our will, we should yield without a murmur. And not only yield without a murmur, but cheerfully and cordially obey, serve, and honor him, on account of the exalted and boundless nature of his righteous claims. For when he is so worthy that he must do all things especially for himself, we surely ought to do all things for him too. When he made us for him, we ought to live for him; as he did not make us for ourselves, we ought not to live for ourselves; doing so is attempting to thwart the purpose of God in giving us being. But God will not be disappointed; if we refuse to glorify him by our voluntary service, he will glorify himself in our sure destruction. But, on the contrary, if we concur in God's design in giving us existence, and make his glory our chief aim—obeying and trusting in him, then between him and us there will be a unison of purpose, and he will make us supremely happy, in the enjoyment of himself.

God has indeed established a moral system, in which sin and misery are found; but it ought to be remembered that this sin and misery are the portion only of those who refuse to concur with the design of God in giving them existence—and do not make it their chief aim to do his will, thus denying to him the glory which is his



due; and by this course voluntarily choosing sin and misery as their portion. And hence, their portion is their choice, what they follow after and procure by their own doings; being neither inclined nor constrained in any measure by that God, who has established this system of which they form a part. By infinite wisdom the system has in it both virtue and life, and sin and death, and free moral agents may choose for themselves. They may take the service of God and life, if they will; or they may take the service of sin and death, if these please them better. And every one who declines the service of God feels that the course he pursues is his own chosen way; and that he chooses it because he loves it more than he loves the service of God. He feels conscious that he is not compelled to this way by any one, or any thing, but his own inclination. Temptation may be strong, but temptation can do nothing if inclination does not lead the man to comply. Temptation does not compel; God does not compel; and no man is compelled, or can be compelled to commit sin. And this is where we stand—in the midst of, and part of that system where we may exercise that free-will, which constitutes us moral agents, and choose the good, or choose the evil. And God says to all, “Choose ye this day, whom ye will serve.” Serve sin, and take the wages of sin which is death, or serve God, and receive from him the gift of everlasting life. And who does not need to pray to God, to guide, and to incline, to choose aright?

## CHAPTER VII.

IN the inquiry why it is the Lord has been pleased to allow moral evil in the system which he hath established, we ought certainly to be guided by the light of revealed truth. We should not venture to assign reasons for the Lord's procedure, and at the same time disregard what the Lord hath revealed in relation to this matter. And yet many have in a great measure pursued this course; and hence it is not at all strange, that they should have arrived at very erroneous conclusions. And even such as do not deny that "the Lord hath made all things for himself," and that this is the general tenor of the word of God, yet in their reasonings on the existing state of things, they apparently forget this; and seem to take it for granted that the chief design of all God's arrangements was the communication of happiness to his creatures. And hence their main effort is to reconcile the actual state of things with this supposed chief design: and hence too, their fruitless labor to prove that all the evils to which the creatures of God are subject, are best adapted to secure the general good of the whole, and the greatest amount of happiness to the universe at large. But it may well be repeated, that if the chief design in man's creation and government, was the happiness of man, then the design has most manifestly failed. But if

the main design was the glory of God, then it has had, and will yet and forever have, a most signal accomplishment.

Man, however, is very "slow of heart to believe" the teachings of Scripture in relation to this matter. He is, in his fallen state, so destitute of a proper sense of the rightful claims of the Most High, and so very selfish, as to cherish the belief, that his own interests ought to be paramount, even with God, to every other consideration. To man it is very unpalatable doctrine, to tell him that God ought to act for himself, and in such a way as will be most for his own glory, even though in doing this man should be suffered to work out his own ruin. And in relation to this subject there is good ground to address man in the language of the Saviour—"Thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." And hence it is expected, that not a little of what we say on this subject will be very unsavory to many. And often it will be said, as it was of Christ's doctrine, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" But if the views advanced be clearly taught in the pages of Divine Truth, they ought not to be withheld on account of the repugnance felt in the human heart against them.

And in our inquiries after the truth on this subject, there ought to be all reverence and humility of mind; and a deep sense of entire dependence upon God for light and wisdom. The subject is one both solemn and profound. It is even awful in its nature. A subject which treats of the reasons which have led the Divine Being to do what he has done—which have led him to establish a moral system having sin connected with it; and

all the sad and terrible consequences of sin, as experienced by the incorrigible enemies of God, in the prison of eternal death. In the investigation of such a subject it becomes us to say—"O Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." For who does not need heavenly guidance, lest he may ascribe to the Holy One what is inconsistent with his character, or represent him in such a light as would dishonor his holy name, and have him viewed as different from what he really is? And in order that we may not be thus guilty, we must keep close to the Divine Record. And this, we are fully persuaded, when fairly interpreted, warrants the opinion, that the great and all-controlling design of the Creator in all his works, is the manifestation of his character, for the promotion of his own glory; and that he prosecutes this design in the manner best adapted to secure its accomplishment, even though this should lead to the allowance of moral evil, and the loss of happiness to some of his creatures. But while he prosecutes this design in this manner, he is not the cause of the loss of happiness to any of his creatures; it is the result of their own voluntary conduct, when they might have pursued a different course, had they chosen so to do.

In discussing this subject it has already been assumed that in consequence of the infinitely exalted nature of the divine claims, justice requires that in all the works of the Lord, he should be influenced by supreme regard to his own glory. And when we turn to the Word of God, we find that it fully sanctions this position, because it represents the Lord as doing all things for this very purpose. Does it not say expressly: "The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for

the day of evil"? This does not convey the idea that the Lord made all things for the purpose of diffusing happiness by the communication of it to created existences. It cannot mean that he made all things for himself in order that he might be glorified in the communication of happiness to others, for the last clause of the text precludes this idea, as it says, he made the wicked for himself, for the day of evil. The end to be answered, then, in relation to him, by their existence, was not the communication of happiness. Not for others, but for himself, did the Lord make all things. Not for their sake, but for his own sake, hath he made them. His chief aim, then, was to glorify himself, and not to make them happy. In making them he had a design concerning himself to accomplish, and not a design concerning them. And we cannot conceive of any design other than is set forth in Scripture, which the Lord would have concerning himself in the work of creation, namely, to reveal his existence, his nature, and his attributes to an intelligent creation, and to receive from them the honor and glory due unto his name. And if this end be attained, the end of creation is accomplished, whether the greatest possible good of created beings have been secured or not. "The greatest good of the greatest number" was not the end designed; for "the Lord hath made all things for himself." And the last clause of the verse is entirely conclusive, for it says: "The Lord hath made for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil." The day of evil is the day of affliction, of sorrow, and woe. And the wicked were made for this day of sorrow, and the main design of their creation could not be their happiness, because they were made for the day of evil. But



man is ready to exclaim, What! can it be possible that God would create any, and their happiness not be the design in creating them? And the text meets this very objection, for it says: The Lord hath made all for himself, and hath made for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. And the Lord saith, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" Men may find fault and quarrel against God, but it is incontrovertible that this class who were made "for the day of evil" were not made for their own happiness, but for the Lord. The Lord did not make them for happiness, nor yet for misery; *he made them for himself*. The design of their creation was not that they should be *happy*, neither was it that they should be *miserable*; the design was the *glory* of the Lord. Neither their happiness nor their misery was the design of their existence, but that God might be glorified thereby. Their existence was essential to constitute a part of that all-comprehensive system which has been arranged by infinite wisdom, as best adapted to set forth the glory of the Creator. The wicked were not made for their own sake, nor for sake of the suffering which they incur, but for sake of the glory which redounds to God from that moral system of which they are one essential part. And thus it is that the Lord made the wicked for himself, because the arrangement which was best adapted to display his glory could not be executed without their existence. The Lord gives them existence knowing what they will be,

and purposing to allow them to exercise their free-will, in which they may follow their own chosen way in opposition to his authority, and thus they answer an end which could not be answered without them.

That God created and governs all things for his own sake, and not for the sake of his creatures, is clearly taught in the following: "Thou hast established the earth and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are thy servants." The earth and all its fullness, with all its arrangements, are the servants of the Creator, and he hath established them for this purpose. To serve him is the paramount design of all, and not to serve the creatures whom he has made. All are engaged in his service, and answer the design of their creation and establishment, though the creatures themselves do not all enjoy the greatest possible measure of happiness. And thus we are taught that the main design of creation is not the diffusion of happiness, but the manifestation of the existence and attributes of the infinitely worthy Creator himself.

And the same is clearly taught in the following passage: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever, Amen." All things are of God as the author or first cause; all things are through him as the ruler or disposer; and all things are to him as the object or end. So that he hath made all things for himself, for the glory of his own great name. The following remarks of the commentator Haldane are very appropriate:

"Here we have the grand truth which lies at the foundation of all religion. All things are of God, for he is the author of all; his will is the origin of all existence.

All things are *through him*; for all things are created by him as the grand agent. All things are likewise *to him*, for all things tend to his glory as their final end.

“Philosophers represent the communication of happiness as the chief end of man and of creation. But the Scriptures uniformly declare the glory of the Creator as the paramount object of all that takes place throughout the vast limits of the universe. To this the entrance of sin among angels and men is no exception. In itself sin is an affront to the Majesty of God. But there can be no doubt that the results of sin, as well as of all the evil we behold in the world shall signally advance the glory of the Divine character. It was necessary in order to show God to be what he is. Had sin never existed, there would have been no opportunity of manifesting the righteous displeasure of God against it, and his justice in punishing it; nor of displaying his wonderful power, in turning to his glory, that which, in itself, is a dishonor to him.”

Another passage to the same purport is the following: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” According to this, all things were created for the pleasure of the Lord. And if the translation ought to be, “through thy will they are and were created,” yet it gives in substance the same signification; because it conveys the idea that there was no cause for the creation of all things but the Divine will. All things were created that the Divine will might subserve its own ends in creating them. The Lord willed to create all things, that is, it was his pleasure to create them; so that he created all things for his own pleasure,

and not for the pleasure of creatures themselves. These few passages are sufficient as to God's design in the work of creation. And if our views are formed, not by the wisdom of men, but by the Word of God, we must believe that the chief design of creation was the glory of God, and not the communication of happiness to others.

And as the Bible teaches that the design of man's creation was the glory of his Maker; so likewise it teaches that the design of the divine government exercised over man is also for the glory of God; and that the main design of that government is not just to secure the happiness of the governed.

The administration of the divine government consists in the dispensing of *justice* and *mercy*. And if we take the Word of God for our guide, we shall find that the chief and ultimate design, which God had in view in dispensing justice and mercy, is his own glory. This we find stated distinctly in one single passage: "What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? And that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" The "vessels of wrath," the wicked who are left to perish, are dealt with in the exercise of justice; and the "vessels of mercy," they that are saved by grace, are dealt with in the exercise of mercy. And it is not for the sake of both or either that they are thus dealt with. With the vessels of wrath God deals in justice, because it is his will, "to show his wrath and make his power known." Just for the sake of revealing his wrath and his power, he administers justice toward those that are lost; and

not that, "incalculable good may result to thousands of worlds unknown to us, from this exemplification of the evils of rebellion against God." This quotation, from *Schmucker's Popular Theology*, sets forth the reason which human wisdom assigns for God's permission of moral evil; but how different it is from the reason which the Bible assigns! The Bible says, the reason is, "that God might show his wrath, and make his power known;" but the other says, the reason is, that "incalculable good might result to thousands of worlds unknown to us." The one says, it is that God might make known his attributes and character; and the other says, it is for the good of "thousands of worlds." And how very unsatisfactory this human scheme is, as we do not know that these "thousands of worlds" have even any existence. And would it be consistent with wisdom, or goodness, or justice, for God to allow one part of creation to fall into sin and suffering, for the benefit of another part of creation? Is it right that one portion should suffer, just for the good of another portion? Have not the sufferers as good a right to be exempt, as those "thousands of worlds" for whom they suffer? Is this the way we are to conceive of God, that he secures the happiness of a part of his creatures at the expense of the perdition of another part? Such an idea is incompatible with the Divine character, and entirely foreign to the Word of God. That Word teaches, that when God secures the happiness of a part of his creatures, *at the expense of suffering*, this suffering is not allowed to fall upon another part of them, but that he takes it upon himself. That the creature should suffer for the good of the creature, to secure the happiness of the creature, is not God's



arrangement. The Bible does not reveal to us that any are saved from sin and suffering by the sufferings of any creature, but only by the sufferings of the Son of God. And we may safely conclude that it is an unscriptural theory, which assumes that sin and suffering have been permitted in order to prevent sin and suffering; or for sake of the good which would result to "thousands of worlds," or be realized by any portion of the creation. But on the contrary they have been permitted because God was "willing to show his wrath and make his power known." And not merely an exhibition of wrath and power; but wrath against sin, and power to *restrain* and *punish it*, and to cause even *it* to redound to his own glory.

And if we take special cases, in which the justice of God has been specially displayed, it will appear that the reason assigned for this display is the advancement of the Divine glory. The inspired apostle, in connection with the passage cited above, refers to the case of Pharaoh as a comprehensive exemplification of the position, that in dispensing justice, *the manifestation of the existence and attributes of the Divine Being is the paramount design*. It is remarkable with what frequency this is stated in the history of God's dealing with Pharaoh. The following is a part as recorded in Exodus: "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Pharaoh's heart is to be hardened, signs and wonders are to be multiplied, and the Lord's hand is to be stretched out upon the Egyptians, and all for

the purpose of causing them to know that he is the Lord—the one living God and sovereign Ruler of all. And again the Lord says to Pharaoh—“And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.” Here the Lord declares explicitly that he had raised up Pharaoh in order that there might be an occasion for the manifestation of his power, and that his name might be known everywhere throughout the whole earth. And again—“The Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; that I might show these my signs before him. And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son’s son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I *am* the Lord.” Here again we have the same truth; that the Lord dealt with Pharaoh for the purpose of making known his own character. And again—“And the Lord said unto Moses, Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.” The same truth is here again repeated—“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, I will harden Pharaoh’s heart; that he shall follow after them; and I will be honored upon Pharaoh and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord.” “And the Lord said unto Moses, And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them; and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, and upon all his chariots, and upon all his horsemen. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his

horsemen." Now, it is here distinctly stated, and reiterated again and again, that the Lord's design in bringing these judgments upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, was to get honor to himself. And it is declared in all these passages that those displays of the Divine justice were for the manifestation of the Lord's own glorious character—to make him known as the Almighty God—to make him known as hating sin, and punishing the wicked; and as the avenger and deliverer of his own people. And it is very remarkable how frequently it is stated, that these judgments were inflicted in order that God might be glorified; as though intended to correct man's error; because he is so slow of heart to believe that "the Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." The case of Pharaoh is a very striking exemplification of this text. He was made for the day of evil; and the Lord made him for himself; that "his power might be shown in him; and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth." And when the design of the displays of Divine justice is so explicitly stated, we have revealed to us the true end of the permission of moral evil. It was not that "good might result to thousands of worlds unknown to us;" but that God might have ascribed to him, by an intelligent creation, glory and honor, and majesty and power; and be known and revered in that character, which properly belongs to him, as thus revealed in his works.

We turn now to the other department of the Divine government, which consists in the dispensing of mercy. And here also it will be clearly seen that the design is the manifestation of the Divine character for the sake of God's glory; and not merely for the sake of communi-

cating happiness to others. The text already referred to, in Romans ninth, is very explicit—"And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." It is expressly stated here, that if God has prepared "vessels of mercy," and exercised mercy towards them, it was in order that he *might make known* the riches of his glory. It is evident then that the dispensation of mercy has for its paramount and ultimate end the manifestation of the merciful character of God—to make known to others "the riches of his glory;" and not merely to communicate happiness. The design in preparing these vessels of mercy is similarly set forth in Isaiah—"Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. *Even* every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Again—"Because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Now it is evident that God forms these vessels of mercy, and dispenses mercy to them, just in order to obtain to himself glory and praise. And the following passage is to the same purpose:—"Thy people also *shall be* all righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." It is expressly stated that the design of the Lord's thus dealing with them in mercy is that he may be glorified. And the following, from Jeremiah, is explicit in teaching the same doctrine:—"For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave to me the whole house of Israel, and the whole house of Judah,



saith the Lord; that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory." Not for their sake, but for his own sake did he confer distinguishing favors upon Israel and Judah—not that happiness might be theirs, but that glory and praise might be his.

And we shall take a few more passages from the New Testament. In 2d Corinthians we read: "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." All the gracious promises made, and fulfilled in Christ, are to, or for, *the glory of God*. In Philippians we read: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God." Here, also, the administration of mercy, which brings forth the fruits of righteousness, is "to the praise and glory of God." And the same in this, also: "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The Mediator of mercy is to be acknowledged as universal Sovereign, but it is to the glory of God. And in Ephesians we read: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace." This admits of no controversy; it states explicitly, that this gracious predestination to the adoption of children was designed for the glory of God, that the glory of his grace might be praised. As Professor Eadie says: "This was his great and ultimate end, that the glory of his grace might be seen and praised, that this element of his character should be exhibited in its peculiar splendor, for, without the knowledge of it, all conceptions of the divine nature



must have been limited and unworthy." And, again, the apostle, identifying himself with the whole community of believers, says: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, that we should be to the praise of his glory." Here again we have the same truth stated in plain terms, namely, the design of this predestination to eternal life was that the saved might be to the praise of God's glory. And, again, in the third chapter we have a similar announcement: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." This affirms that what was done was in order that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known. There is reference to the unfolding of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, and which mystery was that the church should be so enlarged as to embrace all nations, and salvation be extended to the Gentile world. And the unfolding of this mystery was "to the intent," or in order that the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to principalities and powers in heavenly places. And hence, God's design in the planning and executing this mysterious arrangement was to make known his own marvelously multiform wisdom. The paramount and ultimate design was the glory of God, and not merely the communication of happiness to created existences.

It has now been made to appear from numerous passages that God's chief end in creating and governing is the manifestation of his own glory. And everywhere through the sacred volume does this truth shine out, in

a very conspicuous manner. In the eighth Psalm the glory of God is celebrated, as it is manifested in his works, in the wisdom of his providential management and goodness to man: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens." And the same, also, in the ninth Psalm: "I will praise thee, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works." And, again, in the nineteenth Psalm the glory of God is celebrated as it is revealed in his *works* and in his *Word*: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work." And the 104th Psalm is very full throughout, declaring the glory of God to be the design in the exercise of his creative power and providential care: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. 'O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty, who coverest thyself with light as with a garment, who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain.'" Then, after having enumerated many of the works of the Lord, he says: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches." Then he goes on again to enumerate, and again exclaims: "The glory of the Lord shall endure forever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works." And the 105th Psalm we find commencing with the same theme—the glory of God as revealed in his works: "O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And the same also in the 106th Psalm: "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can show forth all his praise?" The praise

is ineffable, which is to be ascribed to him, on account of his mighty acts. "Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise." And who can read the 145th Psalm, and still doubt as to the design of God's "mighty acts" and "wondrous works?" Because the design of them all most manifestly is that honor, glory, and majesty may be ascribed unto God by his intelligent creation: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts, and I will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom." Thus it is; all, all is for the honor and glory of his great and matchless name. And it is needless to multiply passages, for no careful reader of the Scriptures can fail to perceive that the whole tenor of the Divine Record is that the Lord hath made all things for himself, and that he governs all for himself, doing "according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth;" that "of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

We have found now, that the Scriptures teach in the plainest manner, that God's chief end in creation and

providence, is the manifestation of his own glory; and that, on account of the infinite superiority and worth of his divine character, justice requires that his own glory should be the paramount design in all that he does. And as a sample of man's views, in contrast with the word of God, we take the following paragraph from *Schmucker's Popular Theology*, page 95:

"Whether, as is the case with some human rulers, the divine Legislator had also an ulterior design in regard to *himself*, has been disputed. It is difficult to conceive what object truly terminating in himself, the independent, self-sufficient Jehovah could have in the government of men. Elevated above every creature, he is independent of them for happiness; and infinite in felicity, the tide of his joys rolls on uninterrupted by human weal or woe. Would we stigmatize as ignoble the earthly monarch, the ultimate aim of whose government was not the welfare of his subjects, but his own personal aggrandizement, and who, if need be, would sacrifice the former to the latter? how then can we transfer the groveling conception to that exalted Being in whom all perfections meet?"

In this paragraph, and indeed throughout the entire section on the design of the divine government, the author reasons from analogy, and not from the Word of God. Having stated that the design of a good human government must be only the welfare of the governed, he infers that the design of the divine government can be nothing else. And hence, in the whole of his reasoning, it is assumed that God and man are just upon an equality; that he is in no respect different from us; that is, that God sustains no relation to his creatures different from

that of man to his fellow-man, and that he has no claims superior to those of man; and therefore, what would be unbecoming in man, in his relations to his fellow-man, must also be unbecoming in God! And if it be true that man is upon an equality with God, then the author's reasoning is correct, but not otherwise. The conception, he says, of God governing for his own glory, can not be entertained of "that exalted Being in whom all perfections meet." His own words contain the very reason why God ought to govern for his own glory, namely, because he is "that exalted Being in whom all perfections meet." While arguing that God can not have regard to himself, the language he employs proves the very reverse. But the following paragraph on the same page is still more manifestly in conflict with the Word of God:

"Nevertheless, the benevolent and patriotic governor is regarded as entitled to our praise, though he sought it not; yea, the more entitled to it, because its attainment was not the motive of his conduct. Thus is the Ruler of the universe, the great King of kings, entitled to our warmest affections and supreme adoration, on account of the transcendent glories of his character; and our obligation to glorify him is the greater, because the manifestations of his goodness and mercy were made to confer happiness on the creature. He desires that we should glorify him (that is, love, adore, and imitate his glorious perfections), in order that we may be happy; but does not make us happy in order that he may obtain praise."

It is here taught that God, in doing good to us, does not seek our praise. But God says, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt



glorify me." Now, is it agreeable to Scripture, to say that God "does not make us happy in order that he may obtain praise?" And it is here taught that God's sole design is to make us happy without any regard to his own glory in doing so. But how very different the teachings of the Word of God:—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children . . . to the praise of the glory of his grace." "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his will; that we should be to the praise of his glory." These passages affirm that God makes us happy, in order that he may obtain praise; and the author affirms that he "does not make us happy in order that he may obtain praise." Indeed it would be difficult to conceive of anything more pointedly in conflict with the whole tenor and express declarations of the Word of God. It contradicts all the passages already cited, which teach that God dispenses mercy "for the praise of of the glory of his grace." And the views advanced are so plainly in contradiction of these and the whole scope of the Scriptures, that one is ready to wonder if the author has any Bible; and if he has, what use is made of it; when such views are published in the name of Theology; and without quoting a single text of Scripture in their support! When men, professing to teach Theology, disregard the light of divine truth, and rely upon human wisdom, it may be expected that God will leave them to fall into egregious error, that by coming in conflict with his own Word, they may exhibit the folly of that wisdom, which they take for their guide, in preference to what he himself has revealed.

God has created and governs all things for his own

glory. And hence, how often, in the dispensations of God's providence, do we see it verified, that the arrangement is the Lord's, and not man's? How often do we see the plans of men frustrated by the execution of God's plan—and often in such a way as shows there is no regard to the plans of men—that they are esteemed of no importance when they would contravene the plans of the Almighty? We often see that God's arrangement must be carried out and executed, even though it should overturn man's arrangement, and blast his most cherished hopes; leveling in the dust his fondest desires and expectations, and filling his heart with grief and sadness.

The aged Isaac's plan was in favor of his first born, Esau; and his arrangement was to bequeath to him the blessing; but God's arrangement was that the blessing should be inherited by Jacob. And this arrangement was executed, though the good man, Isaac, was baffled and foiled in his purpose, and the aged patriarch made to "tremble exceedingly." But God's plan must be carried out, though man should feel the bitterest disappointment. Because God's plan is the best, it is most for the glory of God, if it should not be most for the happiness of man. The plan of Joseph's brethren was to prevent him from having authority over them; but God's plan was that Joseph should have this very authority; and he made their plan conspire to the execution of his own, though they are filled with alarm and great distress by his plan's fulfillment. The chief priests, and scribes, and rulers at Jerusalem, for their own peace and prosperity, had a plan to blot out entirely from the minds of the people both Christ and his cause; but God's plan was to make Christ and his cause paramount, both

in Jerusalem, and all through the land of Judea; and he caused their plan to fulfil his own, though they should be filled with wretchedness and sore disappointment. And so the arrangement of the chief priests and scribes was, to make Saul the instrument of suppressing Christianity at Damascus; but God's arrangement was to make him preach the gospel there; and this was executed, though they were filled with anguish of spirit, by having their own chosen instrument turned against themselves for the destruction of them and their cause.

The husbandman has labored and toiled hard: he has sowed his seed, and has the soil in the best condition; it springs and grows, and there is a fine prospect; his arrangement now is, for a bountiful harvest; but God has an arrangement for a night of frost, or a summer's drought; and this arrangement is executed, though man is sadly disappointed, and may have even to suffer in wretchedness and want. Or the husbandman may have his harvest cut, and be rejoicing in the prospect of storing it in good condition; but God's arrangement is, on a certain night, to empty his thick clouds upon the earth, and the torrent comes sweeping down, bearing off, in its turbid waters, the fruits of all his toil. And thus God executes his plan, while man may stand looking on filled with vexation and trouble of mind. Or he may have the fruits of his labor even housed, and feel that he is just about to realize a rich reward for all his toil; but God has an arrangement, that his lightning shall play at a certain point, between the heavens and the earth—and the flame is kindled—and his storehouse with all its rich contents, lies before him a smoking heap of ashes!

And thus we are taught that God will do his pleasure, though this should thwart the purposes of men.

We see a family where a worthy son is the fond idol of every heart. Much self-denial is exercised, and every sacrifice is made for his liberal education. For years they have it before their minds that he shall fill some place of honor and distinction. And great has been his success—the place is almost attained; and they are even rejoicing in anticipation of seeing completed their long cherished arrangement. But an arrow is sped from the quiver of the Almighty—he sickens! he dies! and in an hour their long cherished hopes are blasted. Their plan has failed, for God's plan has interposed, although such blight and sadness should lie upon the hearts of that bereaved family! God, for himself, manages the affairs of men.

The noble steamer is just about to leave her landing at Liverpool. Her decks are crowded from the higher circles of society. How many fond adieus are exchanged, with the view of a brief separation, and a speedy joyful reunion! And how many longing hearts beat high, in anticipation of soon meeting, on the American shores, the dear objects of their most tender affection, and cheering with their welcome presence the circle of their much loved homes! With mingled emotions, and joyful hearts they leave behind them the English Isles, and seek their pathway through the wide, wide sea. Securely and proudly does the noble vessel pursue her onward course through the heaving billows of the deep. And all are full of hope, and joy, and pleasant anticipations, because *their arrangements* succeed so well. But ah!—*God's arrangement!* It has arrested the noble steamer

on her pathway, in mid ocean! And what a change! Terror, and consternation, and dread dismay run through all. Great exertions are made to carry out man's arrangement; but all in vain. She rolls—she swings—she heaves—she sinks! And as the waters close over the living mass, one mighty sigh rises from the opening, where the noble Arctic, with all on board, has gone down, down, like lead in the mighty waters! Does God then, arrest his own arrangement for the sake of man? “Come and see the works of God; he is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.”

The great powers of Europe are engaged in war—three against one, and one against three. Turkey, England, and France on the one side, and Russia on the other. The cause of Russia stands alone, and much power is combined against her. Singular indeed, and great, must be the energies which will sustain that cause; and yet these energies all centre in one man, the Autocrat himself. The Emperor Nicholas is the life, soul, and strength of Russia. His counsels, his wisdom, his plans, and his indomitable perseverance alone are adequate to manage the contest. The destinies of Russia, of Europe, perhaps of the whole world, are suspended upon the presence, activity, and energy of the Emperor Nicholas. And just in the midst of the conflict, the summons comes from Heaven; and God's arrangement requires the presence of Nicholas in eternity. And at once he has to withdraw from the conflict; and leave those affairs, which he and the world thought, were of such vast importance to himself and others—and this too, that God's affairs might have that attention which their infinitely greater importance demands!—“The Most High ruleth in the kingdom



of men—"It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers—Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." His own undisturbed affairs must move on, though "he bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." Many, many such providential testimonies have we, that God's arrangement must be executed, though thereby should be overturned the most important arrangements of men.

It has been ascertained now, from the explicit testimony of divine truth that the main design and ultimate end of both creation and providence is the manifestation of the existence and glorious perfections of the Deity; that God might be glorified in all his works of creation, and in all his governing dispensations. And that in consequence of the transcendent superiority of the Divine character, in accordance with the requirements of eternal justice, it is imperative that God should do all things for his own glory; and that he should do whatever is best adapted to secure that end. And hence, if a moral system, where sin is permitted to have a place, be best adapted for this purpose, then such a system is certain to be established.

Now, bearing in mind, that "God hath made all things for himself," for the glory of his own great name, we need not any more be perplexed as to the use of any thing that has existence—it exists for the glory of the Creator. And if men would only remember the teachings of the Bible, they would cease to ask, What is the

use of this insect, or that reptile, or any noxious weed? Creation teems with living forms in endless variety; and the wisdom and power of the Creator are displayed in them all. The endless variety of form and structure, and the adaptation of every living thing to its own proper sphere of existence, are marvelously evincive of wisdom. In air, earth, and ocean, what countless numbers and forms; each having its own specific organism and position! And in each organism every atom proportioned, arranged, and energized to suit the end designed, in the construction of one complex whole. And everything in air, earth, and ocean, filling its own appropriate place, in one greater complex whole, comprehended in the boundaries of this wide world. And this wide world itself, with its teeming millions, fitted to its proper place, as one of another still greater complex whole, comprehended in the arrangements and evolutions of the solar system. And the solar system itself, with all its parts and evolutions, fitted to its place, as one of a still greater complex whole—that vast multitude of systems which constitute the universe of God. What wondrous power and marvelous wisdom are here displayed! Well may it be said with the Psalmist—"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens."—"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all."—"All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy saints shall bless thee."

And in the existence of all that is annoying and hurtful to man, are exhibited the wisdom and power of God, not only in the structure of each respectively; and adaptation of each to its own sphere of existence; but also

in that they are made to serve the righteous purpose of chastising man for his iniquity. They are God's ministers reminding man of his ill deserts, and his need of reconciliation with that great Being, who is the sovereign Lord and disposer of all, and so infinite in wisdom as to cause all things answer the wisest and the best of ends. The deadly lightning's flash, the tempest, the tornado, the destructive flood; the blighting frost, and the scorching sun; the dismal sandy desert, and the miasmatic marshy plain; the tares and the briars; the thorns and thistles; the locust, the caterpillar, and the moth: the cutworm, the weevil, and the fly; the hornet, the viper, the mosquito, and the gnat—all, all testify that man is a rebel against his God; and that God has a controversy with the apostate race. And all verify the execution of the sentence—"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." And in the 107th Psalm the same solemn truth is set forth—"He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." And the conclusion is: when man is vexed and plagued by anything which God hath made, instead of peevishly asking, "What is the use of this?" he ought to be reminded of his apostasy from God, and his imperative need of redemption: and, by faith in the Saviour, hasten to make his peace with that righteous Being, the tokens of whose displeasure are so evident against an evil and rebellious race.

## CHAPTER VIII.

It has now been proved at some length from the Word of God, that the grand and ultimate design, in all the works of the Lord, is the manifestation of his own glory, that justice to the glorious Godhead requires it should be so. And as the Lord is regulated by the principles of eternal justice, he will of consequence establish such a system, as is best adapted for the manifestation of his own attributes, and the exaltation of his own most glorious name. And hence, if a system comprehending moral evil, be best adapted for this end, then, in accordance with justice it will be established. And the design at present is to show that a system comprehending moral evil is better adapted for the manifestation of the Divine character than a system without moral evil would be. But we do not go about to *prove* that a system comprehending moral evil is the one best adapted to reveal the true character of God; because this is *proved* already, by the fact that God has actually established such a system: and if such a system had not been the best, he had not established it. Whatever he has done for any purpose, is the best that could be done for that purpose. If it were not so, it would imply that the work of God is not perfect. And it would imply irreverence to go about to *prove*, that what God has done is best, because it would seem to intimate that the propriety of his doings

may be called in question. But while we do not attempt to *prove*, that what God has done is best, we may attempt to explain and show *how* it is best. The fact that God has established a moral system where sin obtains, is in itself sufficient evidence, that such a system is best for the display of the perfections of the Divine Being. For if the entrance of sin were not most for the glory of God, why should he allow its entrance, since he is Almighty, and has entire control of the system which he hath established? God would surely have hindered the entrance of sin, if it had been most for his own glory to do so. But he has not done so. And we are then shut up to the conclusion, that in his infinite wisdom he knew the permission and entrance of sin would be more for his own glory, than if he should exclude it from the moral system which he purposed to establish. And *how* sin's entrance is more for his own glory, is what we shall now endeavor more fully to explain.

As God's design in creating and governing, is to make himself known, in the fullness of his infinite nature, to an intelligent creation, he will doubtless reveal himself in the best possible manner. The *best* evidence of what he is, which can possibly be given, will most certainly be afforded. And the Lord's declarations as to what he is, though good evidence, is not the best which lies in his power to give. Though he is a God of truth and cannot lie, yet his declarations may, and are doubted; but his doings cannot be doubted, that is, facts can not be denied. Declarations, or assertions, in many cases may be confirmed by performance. The *doing* is the undoubted proof of the *saying*. One whom you know to be a man of truth, may say that he is able to take up and



carry a thousand weight, yet you may think that he is in some way mistaken, and you may hesitate to believe; but if he take up the weight and carry it in your presence, you can no longer hesitate, there is then no room for doubt or unbelief. *Doing* is demonstration, and is the *perfection* of evidence. And in every case where *doing* can be admitted, the evidence is incomplete without it. *Declarations* may carry with them great weight, but, in some cases, only *performance* is the perfection of evidence. The evidence in any given case is not perfect in measure, unless it be the whole of the evidence which the nature of the case will admit. A man may say that he can carry a thousand weight, and he may bring a thousand men to testify to the truth of what he says, but he can give still *better* evidence, and that is, take up the weight and carry it. And, bring what evidence he may, it is still incomplete till he has done this; because it is not the best evidence of which the case will admit. Only *performance* is the perfection of evidence. God might *declare* that he had power to create a world, but this would not be the best evidence which he could give that he has such power; he may add the *doing* to the declaration; and without it the evidence is incomplete. While the evidence is *susceptible of receiving additions*, it is unfinished, and hence, imperfect. And it would be an unworthy conception of God, to suppose him attempting to reveal his nature and attributes, by the force of unfinished and imperfect evidence. Perfection is essential unto God, not only as to what he is, but also as to what he does. As it is written—“He is the Rock, and his work is perfect.” And if his work be perfect, he affords the perfection of evidence

in relation to his nature and attributes. And this perfection of evidence can be found only in the establishment of such a system, as will call into exercise all the attributes of the Divine Being; and that too, in such a manner as is characterized by perfection. The full exercise of all the divine attributes furnishes that finished evidence which comports with the character of Him whose "work is perfect," and with the transcendent importance of that concerning which this evidence is given. It is *God's* evidence concerning *God*, and it cannot but be perfect. Were he to leave undone what would better reveal his character, then he would not be a faithful witness for God; and his testimony would not correspond to the unspeakable greatness and majesty of that Being concerning whom it is offered. And hence, God's testimony concerning God must be perfect. Whatever infinite wisdom can devise, and almighty power execute, consistently with the Divine character, will undoubtedly be performed, in revealing the existence and attributes of the Living and True God.

Of the assumption that God will afford the best evidence of which the nature of the case will admit, we have confirmation in the sixth chapter of Hebrews: "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Although the *word* of God is immutable, yet it was his pleasure to add to it his *oath*, in order that the best evidence of which the case would admit might be afforded. And that which is agreeable

to the Divine procedure in one case is doubtless so in every other. When it is the Divine plan to add his *oath* to his *word* that he may give the best evidence of the immutability of his counsel, he will undoubtedly add to his word, whatever is necessary to constitute the best evidence of his nature and attributes. And this best evidence is furnished by the establishment of such a moral system as will afford the full exercise of all the attributes of the Divine Being, and their exercise in every form of manifestation.

One special arrangement for the manifestation of the divine character is the erection of a government, or kingdom. The Lord has set up a kingdom, and his plan is to make himself known by ruling over this kingdom. By managing the affairs of his kingdom, his true character is revealed to an intelligent creation. That he is a King and has a kingdom needs no very extended proof. Everywhere throughout the Scriptures he is spoken of in this character.

“The Lord is King forever and ever.”

“For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and he is the governor among the nations.”

“Who is the King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

“The Lord sitteth upon the floods; yea, the Lord sitteth King forever.”

“For the Lord Most High is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth.”

“The Lord reigneth, let all the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof.”

“The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.”

“For the Lord is our Judge; the Lord is our Law-giver; the Lord is our King.”

“The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.”

“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power, to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.”

Such is the language of Scripture as to the kingly character of the Lord. And in the last quotation, he is represented as having not only a kingdom, but a kingdom to which pertain both “glory” and “glorious majesty.” And this “glory” and “glorious majesty” of his kingdom, no doubt, result in part from the fact, that the Lord rules over enemies as well as friends. He rules in the face of opposition. And thus the transcendent superiority of his infinite wisdom and power is manifested, in controlling, subduing, and conquering hostility, cunning, malignant, and powerful. But if there were no sin, there would be no opposition, and the “glorious majesty” of ruling in the midst of his enemies would not pertain to the kingdom of the Most High. And then, how could it be shown that he is the *Most High*? It is quite evident that if there were no sin, the nature of the divine government would be entirely changed. It would then be a government without opposition. There would be none to restrain, none to subdue, none to conquer; neither would there be any to reclaim and restore to allegiance, loyalty, and happiness. And then there would be no place for that manifestation and exercise of the divine attributes, which are now witnessed in restraining, subduing, and conquering;

and in reclaiming, restoring, and saving such as have apostatized from God.

Had moral evil been excluded from the dominions of the Most High, it might be difficult to say what one of the divine attributes could have such manifestation and exercise as would comport with the greatness and majesty of the Divine Being. And the opinion might justly be advanced, that if there had been no sin there had been no place for the complete exercise of a single one of the divine attributes. Even the *goodness* of God could not have had its perfect exercise, because there would have been no place for that manifestation of goodness, which consists in the redemption of transgressors. The divine goodness could have been exercised in extending and securing happiness to all; but it could not have been exercised in extending pardon and in restoring to happiness those who had offended. And hence, the goodness of God would have been limited in its exercise. There would have been scope for it in one direction, but none for it in another direction. This goodness would have been manifested and witnessed in only one of its aspects, and forever concealed in the other of its aspects. It would have been seen in giving happiness, but not in restoring to happiness from sin and misery. And that it should be seen in its aspect of redeeming the guilty is doubtless of as much importance as that it should be seen in any other aspect. Had there been no sin and no place for redemption, it never could have been known that God would forgive, that he would extend pardon to his enemies, except so far as it could have been made known by his own declarations. God might have revealed, by proclaiming it, that he was



merciful; but we do not see how he could possibly have given any other evidence of it, or how he could have confirmed his declarations by his doings. He never could, by *the exercise* of mercy, have proved to the universe the truth of what he had affirmed. And hence, the only evidence which the universe could have had that God was merciful, would have been the Divine declaration. And the exercise of mercy they never could have witnessed. And none ever could have said, that they had seen the mercy of God. But God does not leave his universe in this condition, as to any of his attributes; he makes himself known by what he does, as well as by what he says. He affords the best evidence that can be afforded of his merciful character, which is *the exercise* of mercy. And no measure of evidence short of this would be compatible with the Divine character in executing the great design of manifesting himself to the universe. Did he not afford this evidence of the divine mercy he would not be a faithful witness for God, inasmuch as that which would best reveal the mercy of God had been withheld. We see, then, that such a system of divine government must be established as will afford place for the exercise of God's mercy, and that system can only be one where moral evil is permitted.

And since mercy is one of the Divine attributes, could it possibly remain forever inactive? Is there any attribute of God which never has any exercise? It is difficult to conceive that any of the divine attributes could lie forever concealed, inactive, without their appropriate exercise. It is true, the exercise of the Divine attributes depends upon the Divine will. They are ex-

exercised according as it is the Divine pleasure they should, and as he makes provision for their exercise. But if it be his pleasure that some of them shall be exercised, why not all? We cannot easily conceive of any cause why God should choose to give exercise to some of his attributes, and choose to leave others forever unexercised. If there is with him sufficient cause for the exercise of any, there is doubtless sufficient cause for the exercise of all. If the manifestation of the Divine character requires the exercise of any, it requires the exercise of all. Because the exercise of *some* of the Divine attributes would manifest only a *part* of the Divine character; and the remaining part of that character could be manifested only by the exercise of the remaining attributes. And it thus appears, that, in order to the manifestation of the whole of the Divine character, all the Divine attributes must be called into exercise. The same cause that demands the exercise of one, demands the exercise of all. As the chief end which God has in view, in the exercise of any one of his attributes, is his own glory, this must lead him equally to the exercise of all his attributes. If he be led to exercise power or wisdom, for his own glory; he must be equally led to exercise mercy for the same purpose. But when, and where, and how, it shall be exercised, depends upon his own sovereign pleasure. And thus, the same cause necessarily leads to the exercise of all the Divine attributes. And hence, if mercy be an attribute, provision must be made for its exercise, it can not possibly remain inactive. But mercy cannot be exercised if there is no sin. Mercy implies guilt, ill-desert. It is goodness, not to *the innocent*, but to those who deserve punishment. And this desert of punishment

implies sin. There must be sin then, in order to the exercise of mercy. And as the Divine attribute of mercy can not remain forever inactive, there must be a divine government established where sin shall be permitted, in order that this attribute may have its appropriate exercise. And it is thus evident that, in order to the manifestation and the exercise of mercy, sin must have a place in that dominion or empire, which God establishes for the revelation of his own most glorious character. It must be seen that God's dominion is a merciful dominion, or the true character of God will not be set forth thereby. In order that he may be fairly represented he must have a kingdom where rebels shall be pardoned, and restored to the Divine favor. There is reason to believe that no small measure of "the glory of his kingdom," results from the exercise of mercy; especially such mercy as is displayed in man's redemption. It is mercy incomprehensibly great and glorious; because it moved God to give his co-equal, only-begotten, and well-beloved Son, to suffer and die, as an atoning sacrifice, for the sins of ill-deserving, God-hating enemies. Mercy which gives a *Divine person* to suffer for *vile sinners*, is infinitely great and transcendently glorious. And that kingdom where such mercy is exercised must be unspeakably glorious. And supposing we could conceive of no other cause for the establishment of a kingdom with moral evil permitted, this might be viewed as amply sufficient, that there might be a display of such marvellous mercy, as is exercised in the redemption of rebellious man. And it is in no way incompatible with the Divine character, to suppose that God was willing to establish a kingdom in which moral evil should be

permitted, in order that his exceeding great mercy might be manifested and exercised in the forgiveness of sin.

In the execution of the Divine plan, for the glory of his own kingdom, God has suffered an opposing kingdom to be established, "Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," is the head and sovereign of that kingdom. He is designated in Scripture as "the prince of this world," and "the god of this world," and "the prince of the power of the air," and "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience;" and his kingdom is designated as "the kingdom of darkness." And he is represented in the Word of God, as the chief leader and instigator in all the workings of iniquity among men. It was by his agency that the kingdom of sin was first set up in this world. And we can not for a moment doubt, that God could have prevented him if he had so willed. He could certainly have prevented Satan from entering the Garden at all; he could have confined him in his prison-house of eternal death, if it had been his pleasure. But he suffered him to go at large, and extend his dominions, and enlarge the field of his infernal machinations; and thus to strengthen his own kingdom in opposition to the kingdom of the Almighty. Satan was permitted to add this world to his empire, not absolutely and irrecoverably; but in so far as to have the standard of revolt erected and upheld for a time, in opposition to the authority of God. And the purpose of God in permitting this was, that in this world there might be a special display of the transcendent superiority of God himself and his kingdom, over all the opposition with which they might have to contend. In order that

might come to pass what is implied in the language—“They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom.” God’s “mighty acts,” in subduing his enemies, as in Egypt and the Red Sea, could never have been seen nor celebrated, had there been no sin, and none to rise up against him. And “the glorious majesty” of God’s kingdom, in subduing and conquering every other kingdom, could never have been seen nor celebrated, if there had been no other kingdom to oppose and conquer. Hell with its hosts and its powers of darkness, combined with earth, with all the strength of its worldly kingdoms, are kept in check and controlled by the kingdom of the Almighty. Hell may put forth all its hostility, and the kingdoms may rage “against the Lord and against his Anointed,” but “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. He shall speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure;” holding them in check by his power; arresting their progress at will; and punishing them according to their deeds; thus displaying his Divine excellence and infinite superiority over and above all. And long, long, have hell and earth been suffered to ply their powers, in order that the conquest of both may be the more glorious in the end. And thus, “the mighty acts of the Lord, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom,” will be revealed in the complete subjugation of these powers, which so long have held dominion among the children of men. But had there been no sin, this all-subduing might of God’s dominion never could have been made known.



And by the erection of Satan's kingdom in the apostasy of man, there is occasion afforded for the special exercise of all the Divine attributes. In relation to the mercy of God, it has already been shown that it is only in consequence of sin's entrance, that this attribute of the Godhead could at all be revealed. But as Satan's design was that God and his kingdom should be reviled and dishonored by the apostasy of man, this design has been foiled by a most remarkable defeat. For Satan's effort has but opened the way for the manifestation and exercise of that attribute of the Deity, which sheds the most peculiar splendor and glory over the character of the Divine Being. For though God is glorious in holiness, and inflexible in justice, and utterly incapable of making any compromise with iniquity, yet it is his special glory that he "delighteth in mercy." And mercy is designated also as "the riches of his glory." The fullness and variety of the Divine glory are comprehended in his mercy. It is the most precious and endearing element of this glorious character. It is this which encourages sinful man to look up with hope to an offended God. He is "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." And none ever were disappointed, or sent empty away, who sought for this mercy in sincerity and truth. The most worthless, the most vile, the most guilty, freely share in this mercy; "and whosoever will," may take of it "without money and without price." It turns away none, who come, on account of unworthiness and guilt. There is no sin too great for this mercy of God to forgive, when it is sought for in the appointed way of its communication. Man's sins may abound, but this

mercy can superabound, and save from them all, if only applied for according to the will of God. Even those, who have long continued in sin, and whose sins are of the most aggravated kind, are freely forgiven by this rich and tender mercy of God. The thief is saved by it, though it had been rejected by him until the very last day of his godless and guilty life. The bloody persecutor, on his way to Damascus, is saved by it, though he despised it, and hated that Jesus through whom alone it could be dispensed. But the mercy of God is so compassionate, rich, and free, that the chief of sinners is snatched as a brand from the burning, while "yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and even raging "against the Lord, and against his Anointed." But the tender mercy of God arrested him in the midst of his eager career of iniquity and death. And thus the Lord magnified his mercy; and the saying of the Psalmist was verified—"Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens," that is, gloriously exalted and conspicuous; being exercised in saving such vile, God-hating creatures, as is hard-hearted and rebellious man! How true it is that "The Lord is merciful and gracious; slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy." "He will not always chide; neither will he keep his anger forever." For "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them;" for "his tender mercies are over all his works." And thus it is that the "glorious majesty" of God's kingdom is advanced,

through the very agencies employed by the opposing kingdom to dishonor God, and to thwart his purposes and plans.

And on this subject we are not left to mere conjecture, for the Scriptures clearly reveal that the manifestation of mercy was one of the principal reasons why God willed the actual state of things with sin permitted among the human family. In Romans, ninth chapter, we read as follows:—"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" In this chapter it is argued at length, that the objects of the divine mercy are selected from the apostate race, by the sovereign pleasure of God, without regard to any merit on the part of man. And we are told that God selected these vessels of mercy for the purpose of revealing in them his glorious grace. It is plainly taught in the passage that, it was the will of God such a state of things should exist as would give occasion for the exercise of mercy. God willed the existing state of things—"That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." They were prepared in the Divine purpose, destined by the Divine decree, that is, foreordained to glory. And the reason of this foreordination, we are told, was because God willed it. And the reason why he willed it was, that he might make known his attribute of mercy, which in its exercise is designated as "the riches of his glory." And hence, the actual state of things is resolved into the will of God. And the reasons

which God assigns for his procedure are surely sufficient; who shall dare to call them in question? When the manifestation of the Divine mercy was with God a sufficient reason why he should establish a moral system in which sin was to be permitted, who has a right to find fault? Or who will venture to say that the reason assigned for sin's permission is not of such magnitude as to warrant such a procedure? When it is clearly revealed that it was the will of God to establish the existing state of things, for the sake of manifesting his own attributes, we cannot doubt the propriety of his doing so. And it is undeniably evident that the Divine goodness never could have gone forth in the exercise of mercy, if moral evil had not been permitted; and none of the sweets and joys of mercy could ever have been realized in the universe of God; and never could have been sung, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting," and, "his tender mercies are over all his works."

And in relation to the divine attribute of omnipotence, it may be observed that there would be no place for its perfect exercise or manifestation, if there were no moral evil. Great and marvelous exhibitions of power might be given, and still it might be questioned whether Almighty power were possessed. It might be admitted that there was power adequate to create, and uphold, and govern, while there was no opposition; and yet it might be doubted whether there were power to control and subdue in case of active hostility. If sin had not been permitted, the throne of the Divine dominion would have stood in the midst of none but loyal subjects; and the Lord would have ruled only amongst his friends. And in such case it might be considered a comparatively

easy matter to maintain his sovereignty, when there would be no foe to face, and no enemy to subdue. A weak sovereign might reign in the midst of his friends, when there is nothing to contend with, no power with which to compete, and none with whom to engage in conflict. In a government of this kind, it would be difficult to demonstrate that the sceptre was wielded by a hand of extraordinary power. And though there might be the appearance of power, while untried, yet when assailed by an opposing power, there might be found nothing but despicable weakness. The appropriate test and manifestation of power is in its collision with power. There can be no indubitable evidence that the power is supreme, until its superiority is witnessed in the subjugation of every other power. And accordingly, if there were no opposing power, there never could be an adequate exhibition of the Divine Omnipotence. In order that there may be a full and sufficient display of the Almighty's power, there must be an opposing power to control and subdue; but such opposing power necessarily implies the existence of moral evil. If there had been no moral evil, God's dominion would have been without a rival and without a foe; and never could it have been shown that his power was adequate to humble his rivals, and to conquer his foes. And thus it never could have been made to appear that Omnipotence was really an attribute of God.

And the light of divine truth shines direct upon this part of the subject, so that we are not left to conjecture any more than when the attribute of mercy was under consideration. In Romans, ninth chapter, we read thus—  
“What if God, willing to show his wrath and to make



his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" God endured, or bore with these "vessels of wrath," in all that tended to fit them for destruction; and that is sin and all manner of wickedness. But God endured and permitted this, because it was his will "to show his wrath and to make his power known." And it is undoubtedly implied, that God willed the permission of moral evil, in order that he might make known his wrath and his power—his wrath against sin, and his power to control and to subdue it. In the chapter it is ascribed to the sovereign will of God that some of the fallen race of men are saved, and others left to perish in their sin. And the reason why God was willing to endure them with much long-suffering, was that he might have occasion "to show his wrath and to make his power known." And thus the passage states, very distinctly, one of the reasons why moral evil has been permitted in the system of things which God has established. Had there been no sin, God could not have shown his hatred of sin by dealing with it as it deserves; nor could he have shown that he is Almighty, able to control and to subdue his most determined and malignant foes. In the passage then, we have an explicit statement why it is that God endures in his dominions the workers of iniquity; and it is that he may show his wrath against sin, and display his Omnipotence in subduing and conquering all those who rise up against him and his righteous administration.

And the erection of Satan's kingdom in the apostasy of man, has given occasion for special displays of the divine power, not merely in controlling and conquering enemies, but also in changing enemies into friends; even

the power that is displayed in restoring to spiritual life those who were dead in trespasses and sins. In the first chapter of Ephesians, this power is spoken of as being very extraordinary—"That ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*." The power displayed in quickening a dead soul, in raising it from the ruins of the Fall, and in making it spiritually alive, is here described as the "exceeding greatness" of God's power, and "the working of his mighty power." But this exceeding greatness, and this working of God's mighty power, could never have been witnessed in the quickening of dead souls, if man had not fallen, and there had been no moral evil. And thus the temptation in Eden has afforded the occasion for wonderful displays of the power of the Almighty, not only in thwarting the devices of the enemy, and in restraining him at pleasure, but also in raising from the wreck and ruins of sin the dead souls of men, imparting to them divine life, and again adorning them with the holy image—the virtues and graces of the Godhead; and in thus fitting them for the enjoyment of God in heaven, and "for the society of the saints in light."

And here too, is occasion afforded for wondrous displays of the Divine wisdom; and that in such a way as manifests the wisdom of all opposers to be but folly, when brought into competition with the wisdom of heaven's King. How often does he turn the counsels of the wicked into foolishness! how often does he turn their devices against him and his kingdom to operate against themselves, and

to work the ruin of them and their cause ! The cunning of Satan and his emissaries is truly wonderful, in support of the kingdom of darkness. The multitude and variety of Satan's devices to maintain his own cause are perfectly marvellous. And how often they are urged in the name of virtue, and under the guise of doing good ! As when he pleads for the burning of heretics with the pretence of protecting the church of God—and as when he pleads for the desecration of the Lord's Day in the name of saving the people of large cities from vice, and promoting their virtue, "by opening for them places of rational amusement to draw them away from the haunts of intemperance," and by the running of all manner of public conveyances, "to carry them from the crowded city into the green fields, that by their admiration of nature they may learn to admire and worship nature's God;" and as when he pleads for the "dignified rights of the gentleman," in cherishing revenge and committing murder, in the name of "standing up with becoming manly courage in defence of his honor." And when one device fails, how suddenly does Satan introduce another for the purpose of advancing the interests of his kingdom ! His ingenuity, indeed, seems to be inexhaustible, and the subtlety of his plans almost inexpressible. And yet the wisdom of the Lord is adequate to turn them all against the wily enemy himself, in augmenting his own misery, and producing effects the very opposite of that for which they were intended ; for they are all intended to rob God of his glory, and they all result in the manifestation and advancement of his glory. And herein is revealed the infinite superiority of the Divine wisdom, in causing all the cunning of Satan to redound to the Divine glory. The

main design of the temptation in the garden of Eden was to disappoint and dishonor the Almighty ; but God has made it the occasion of securing more glory to his own great name, than perhaps any other event that has ever yet transpired. For through that occurrence the wisdom, power, truth, mercy, justice, and holiness of God, have all been made to shine out in a most conspicuous manner.

It is through that occurrence that we have the most marvellous exhibition of the Divine wisdom, as witnessed in the plan of man's redemption. In this plan it is that he is said to have "abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." And with reference to the unfolding of this plan it is said—"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The "eternal purpose," executed in the plan of salvation, was "to the intent," or with the design that, through the church, the *manifold wisdom of God* should be made known. In which we are evidently taught, that redemption from evil, and consequently the permission of evil, was for the purpose of making known "the manifold wisdom of God." The wisdom of God exhibited in the plan of redemption is of great variety and fullness ; well may it be called "manifold wisdom." That wisdom which could devise a plan by which God could be just, and yet justify the ungodly—by which the violated law of God could have its penalty inflicted, and yet the transgressor escape the punishment ; by which man might escape the curse, and yet humanity bear the curse of God's violated law. That is wondrous

wisdom indeed, which arranges that God in human nature shall make an atonement for man's sins. And accordingly, humanity, assumed by Divinity, is made the spoiler of Satan and his cause. Satan's design was to bring the greatest dishonor to God through the agency of man; but the wisdom of God so baffled his design as to make it recoil upon himself, by inflicting on his cause its sorest defeat through the agency of man; for the seed of the woman was made to bruise the head of the serpent. Humanity even is made the conqueror of Satan, through the infinite wisdom of God. And thus it is, in all the wiles of Satan to thwart the purposes of the Omniscient One, his devices are made to recoil upon himself in ever-recurring defeat and disappointment. And then the wisdom, by which heaven's kingdom is governed, is made to shine out the more conspicuous and glorious in consequence of every such occurrence. But had there been no moral evil, there never could have been any of these displays of the Divine wisdom.

The truth of God also is remarkably verified through the apostasy in Eden. It is now clearly established that God will fulfil his word, whether it be a threatening or a promise. Satan said, as some of his servants say, "Ye shall not surely die," in consequence of sin; but the curse has come as certainly as the threatening was denounced; and man is suffering the direful effects even unto this day. It has long been witnessed by all, that in the righteous government of God, sin and suffering are inseparably connected—that the benevolence of God does not prevent him from executing the threatened vengeance, and inflicting punishment upon those who transgress his law. There has been ample demonstration



now, that when God says, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," his word shall not return unto him void, but have an undoubted fulfillment; for already has it had many a fearful verification in the terrible destruction of the workers of iniquity. The awful overthrow of the antediluvians for their wickedness, and the fearful destruction of the cities of the plain, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," are solemn exemplifications of the truthfulness of God, in his threatenings against sin; showing that the *true* God is a God of *truth*—"He is not a man that he should lie; neither the son of man that he should repent; hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good?" And thus, in consequence of the apostasy of man, has the truthfulness of God been set forth, in such a manner as it could not otherwise have been.

And the evil introduced among men by Satan has called forth some of the most illustrious displays of the Divine justice. It has been very fully manifested now that God is a *just God*, who "will by no means clear the guilty," although he is "merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." All the judgments of God, with which the children of men have been visited on account of their rebellion, are so many proofs of the Divine justice. The expulsion of Adam from Eden; the curse whereby Cain became "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth;" the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, and the opening of the windows of heaven, to drown the world of the ungodly; the raining of fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven, to burn up the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; God's wonders in the land of Egypt, tormenting and consum-

ing both the king and his people; the fire which came out from the Lord and devoured the rebellious Nadab and Abihu; the earth opening her mouth and swallowing up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their houses, their wives, their sons, and their little children; and the fire which, at the same time, came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown; and the plague on the next day, by which fourteen thousand and seven hundred died; and the pestilence, by which "seventy thousand men" of Israel fell dead, for the sin of "numbering the people"—these, all these, and all such visitations, testify in the most undeniable manner that God is just, and that the love and benevolence of his nature do not hinder the exercise and execution of his justice upon those who violate his law.

But it is especially in the appointment of the Redeemer, and in the nature of the work executed by him as the Saviour of sinners, that the inexorable nature of the Divine justice is displayed in the clearest light. In the arrangements of redemption, it is seen that God cannot forgive without satisfaction being made to his offended justice. And herein lies the necessity of the atonement by the Son of God. Had it been possible to extend pardon without an atonement, without the penalty of the divine law being inflicted, God would not have subjected his well-beloved Son to the cruel agonies of the crucifixion. To suppose that sin might be remitted without satisfaction being rendered to the law and justice of God, would imply that God needlessly exposed the immaculate Son of his love to sorrows and suffering without sufficient cause. His humiliation, sufferings,

and death, undoubtedly might have been dispensed with, if sinners could be pardoned by an act of Sovereign clemency, without regard to the claims of justice. And hence, if the Son of God did suffer, it was only because Divine justice required it. There is no rational way of accounting for his sufferings, but on the ground that justice would not relax its claims upon transgressors, unless satisfaction were made in their behalf. And, accordingly, we are told that Christ was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," and he could redeem them only by bearing the law's penalty in their stead. And hence, we are told that "he hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And thus by bearing the law's curse for us, the law's sanctions were inflicted upon him, and offended justice satisfied in his sufferings and death. And when the Son of God undertook to save sinners, became their surety, and assumed their guilt, Divine justice was neither stayed nor turned aside by his infinite excellence and majesty, nor on account of the enduring relationship which existed between him and God the Father. "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." It is in the cross of Christ, in the bleeding, dying Saviour, that we have the most convincing exhibition of the immutable and unremitting nature of God's justice. We see that that justice can spare none where guilt is found. Even the co-equal Son of God cannot escape, though immaculately holy in himself, when he assumes the guilt of others, and undertakes to satisfy the justice of God in their behalf. In the sufferings of the cross of Christ, God has taught his universe by unmistakable evidence, that his justice

must always take its course, and the penalty of his law be inflicted wherever guilt is found, whether that guilt be personal or imputed. And thus the true character of God is set forth and established, in such a way as it never could have been, if the entrance of sin had not been allowed. And the unimpeachable justice and rectitude of the divine kingdom are revealed and confirmed. It is now manifest to all that "the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre," and that "justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

In relation to the holiness of God, it may be easily shown that this all-glorious attribute of the Deity could have had no adequate, perhaps no manifestation at all, if there had been no sin; because holiness is opposition to sin. And had there been no sin how could holiness have been set forth? Just as the true character of any thing, and every thing, is best known by placing it in contrast with its opposite, so holiness can be properly known only when seen in contrast with its opposite, which is sin. The following paragraph from Dr. Chalmers is very appropriate—

"And I should like you to know the precise import of the term *holiness*. It has been defined to be all moral and spiritual excellence. But this does not just exhaust the meaning of the term. It is not just virtue, even in the most comprehensive sense of the word, as including in it all that one absolutely ought to be, both in reference to God and to all the creatures of God. To turn virtue into holiness, a reference must be had to the opposite of virtue—even sin; and then does virtue become holiness, when, in addition to its own positive qualities, we behold with what sudden and sensitive aversion it recoils from

the contamination of its opposite. Thus it is, my brethren, that had there been no sin there would have been no sacredness. There might have been love, and rectitude, and truth, exalted to all that infinity, which they have in the Godhead; and filling too, according to the measure of his capacity, every one being that had sprung from the creative hand of the Divinity. But, in order that the Divinity or any subordinate creature shall make an exhibition of sacredness—it must be seen how it is that he stands affected by the contemplation of sin; or by the approach of sin to his presence. And then it is that we witness the characteristic display of God, in the holiness, or of God in the sacredness that belongs to him—when we read of the eyes that are so pure that they cannot look upon iniquity—when we read of a sanctuary so remote from all fellowship with evil, that it is there impossible for evil to dwell—when we read of God in the awful jealousies, and of God in the unconquerable repugnance of his nature to sin; of the grief and the hostility and the indignation wherewith it is regarded by the Spirit of the Deity. So that, should it offer to draw nigh, all heaven would shrink at its coming; or fire would go forth from the place where his honor dwelleth, to burn up and to destroy. Holiness is virtue, in the one aspect of its separation from all that is opposite to virtue. It is thus that the attributes of clean and pure and untainted are given to it—free from all spot, because free from all mixture or vicinity with sinfulness.”

And thus is apparent the necessity of sin, that this sacredness of the Godhead may be manifested and revealed. God is “glorious in holiness,” but that he is so, could never have been adequately realized if sin had been



excluded from the moral system which he hath established. The infinite holiness of Heaven's King, and the unsullied sacredness of his kingdom, could never have been seen and celebrated, without a place being assigned to sin in the wonderful arrangements of the Holy One. And here again has Satan suffered the deepest disappointment. He designed that the glory of Heaven's Kingdom should be dimmed and defiled by the introduction of sin; but this is that which has caused it to shine forth so much more resplendently, in the high and unapproachable excellence of its sacredness and purity; being seen in contrast with the moral pollution and defilement of that rival kingdom which has been set up. The transcendent holiness of the Divine Being is now witnessed by all. And accordingly, "the seraphim"—"the four living creatures"—symbolical representatives of God's wide creation, "cease not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come"—"the whole earth is full of his glory."

And the love of God could never have been exercised and revealed as it is, had it not been in consequence of moral evil. Without sin it might have been seen that God loved his unoffending creatures, who were innocent and holy, loving their Creator and worthy of his love. But that love of God, "which passeth knowledge," is now witnessed in its going forth towards his enemies—enemies exceedingly guilty and defiled; having, in the exercise of their own free will, set themselves in opposition to God and his good and holy law; and who, in disregard of all his claims, corrupt themselves with the indulgence of the very iniquities which he has forbidden. And though they make themselves "enemies in their minds

by wicked works," and render themselves so exceedingly vile in his sight, he loves them notwithstanding. And thus there is a display of love which is infinite—not limited nor hindered in its exercise by any measure of worthlessness and guilt. Love to hateful and God-hating enemies, is the wonderful love of God. This is that love of God which is celebrated in the Scriptures as being so great, and transcending all conception and expectation. "Greater love," saith the Saviour, "hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But Christ laid down his life for *his enemies*; and hence, his love was not like the love of any man; it is Godlike, it is Divine. It is boundless love, because it is not circumscribed or restrained by the unworthiness of those toward whom it is exercised. It is infinite, or limitless, because it is neither called into exercise, nor regulated in its exercise by the moral qualities—the worthiness or unworthiness of the objects of its regard. And so also the apostle sets forth this love as unexampled and surpassing in its nature. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The utmost measure of love conceivable among men would be for one to die for *a good man*. It is not supposable that any would die for a merely just or upright man, with whom no fault could be found; but possibly for "a good man," not merely just, but a public benefactor of his race, some might venture to die. And this is the extreme of love which can be conceived of among men; it comes fully up to all that reason could expect; and is the very utmost that gratitude and kindness would

require. "But God commendeth his love"—he sets it forth in an advantageous light—manifests it to be transcendent love, "in that while we were sinners Christ died for us." But had there been no moral evil, God could not have "commended his love toward us," in this manner. That God is so boundless in love as to give "his only-begotten Son" to die for *his enemies*, could never have been witnessed, if the entrance of sin had not been permitted. And the universe of God never could have had any display of God's *forgiving love*. And yet we are taught that this *forgiving love* is essential to the perfection of the Divine nature. The Saviour says—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. . . . Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father, which is in heaven, is perfect." God is represented here as being perfect, because he loves his enemies, and does good to them that hate him. The Divine capability of loving *enemies* seems to be viewed as the perfection of the Divine excellence. The perfection of the Deity would be wanting without this trait of the Divine character. If he did not love enemies, he would be without one of those perfections which are essential to the Divine Being. But if there were no enemies, this perfection could have no existence—enemies could not be loved if there were none. And if the creatures of God had been kept in a state of loving obedience to him, there would be no enemies to love; and this perfection of the Deity could have neither existence nor exercise. And God then, could not be the same perfect Being which he is; he would be wanting in this

perfection, and therefore he would not be the God which he is. But this perfection belongeth unto God; and hence he loves his enemies; and hence there are those who have made themselves his enemies by their wicked works; and hence the permission of moral evil. The existing state of things is essential to the complete, effective, practical perfection of the One Living and True God; without it he would not be what he is, and be wanting in the perfection, which now belongs to him. And herein lie the very reasons of sin's permission—that the attributes of the Deity might have their appropriate and essential exercise and manifestation.

But is it not implied in this representation that it was the good pleasure of God, that moral evil should have place in the system which he hath established?—that it was, in short, the will of God, that sin should enter among his works, and be permitted to entail the evil consequences which ensue? And it is true—this is certainly implied; for God “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” And since he has permitted the entrance of sin, and works all things after the counsel of his own will, then it was with his will that he permitted it. He did not permit it against his will. It was undoubtedly the will of God that moral evil should have place in his moral system. For if it exists against his will, it follows of necessity that he is not Omnipotent. Omnipotence means all power. And all power must mean power over all things. Power less than this is not all power. This power over all things does not imply power to work contradictions; but implies ability to do with all things whatever there is a will to do. “Hence when it is said that God is Omnipotent,” it does

not merely mean that "he is the source of all power that is or can be." But the proper meaning is, that he has in himself *all power over all things*, so as to be able to do with *all things*, *all* that he *wills* to do. If God has not power to accomplish his wishes, he obviously is not Omnipotent. No one would ever dream that a being who cannot do what he wants to do is Almighty. And if God willed the non-existence of evil, and yet it exists against his will, then he has not power to do what he wills to do, and he is not Omnipotent. To say that God willed that there should be no sin, and was not able to prevent it, is just denying that Omnipotence belongs to him. The notion entertained by many that God has not ability to do what he wishes to do, is set forth in the following observation of Soame Jenyns—"We have reason to conclude, that to endue created beings with perfection, that is, to produce good exclusive of evil, is one of those impossibilities which even Infinite Power cannot accomplish." But while it is admitted that Infinite Power could not endue created beings with perfection, it does not follow that Infinite Power could not prevent them from falling into sin. The power of God is undoubtedly adequate to keep fallible creatures from falling, if it were only his pleasure to do so. And we have every reason to conclude that, had it been the will of God "to produce good exclusive of evil," his "Infinite Power" could have infallibly accomplished it. If his power was not adequate to do what he willed to do, it was not Infinite, it was nothing but power, in kind, just like that which belongs to a finite and limited creature. Thompson, in his *Christian Theism*, tells us that Jenyns' "observations on this point met with the censure of Dr.



Johnson;" and very justly; because they imply that God is wanting in power to accomplish what he would prefer. They represent "Infinite Power" as doing its utmost "to produce good exclusive of evil," but failing in the effort. And this, and all similar assumptions carry with them a denial of the Divine Omnipotence. All these speculations about the "possibilities" and the "impossibilities," and our ignorance of "the certain conditions to be satisfied to give the possibility of creation," whether advanced by Leibnitz, or Jenyns, or Thompson, or whomsoever else, have couched in them a negation of Almighty Power. Because they all imply that God was so controlled by something, that he could not accomplish what was most desirable to him; and that he was, and is hindered from doing what he wanted, and wishes to do. And all speculations and theories implying this, are in conflict with the Word of God, and repugnant to all just conceptions of the true character of the Almighty. And men are led into these unwarranted speculations, because they are so slow to admit the Scripture truth, that "The Lord hath made all things for himself," and that the chief end of the existing state of things is "the glory of God."

But does not the Bible teach that the existence of moral evil is contrary to the will of God? It teaches that moral evil is contrary to the will of God, but not that it has a place among his works contrary to his will. He is willing that what is contrary to his will should exist. Sin is contrary to his will, and yet he is willing to let men commit sin. Pharaoh's whole course of iniquity in opposing the Hebrews was contrary to the will of God, yet God was willing to permit him to pursue

that course. The wickedness of the King of Assyria, committed by invading the land of Israel, was contrary to the will of God, and God punished him for it; but yet God permitted him to do it, and even "sent him," we are told, and "gave him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets." *Moral evil* is contrary to the will of God, but the *permission* of moral evil is not contrary to his will.

But are there not Scripture texts which teach that God would prevent moral evil if he could? Is it not written that God "is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"? But this does not say that God would have prevented moral evil had he been able; nor does it say that he exerts his omnipotence to hinder all men from sinning; nor does it say that men perish against his will; that is, though he does all in his power to save them. It just says that God is long-suffering to sinners, and that his will is not the cause why any perish, and that if all would repent he would pardon and save them. It only speaks of God's willingness to save all if they would turn to him, and states the fact that if any perish, not his will, but their own is the cause. But it says nothing at all about God putting forth the power of his omnipotence to save all. God is "not willing that any should perish." This cannot mean that men perish though God *wills*; that is, *purposes, determines* that they shall not; else, when God says, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," he does not speak the truth. And God would be neither a God of truth, nor the Almighty. The word "willing" here has its very

common signification of *wanting, wishing, desiring*. God is not wishing or desiring that any should perish. God does not desire the perdition of any, but he does desire to have an intelligent creation, and a moral system and government in which moral beings shall have freedom of will to choose either good or evil, and in which it may be possible for them to choose the evil and perish. But he does not desire their perdition, nor did he create and establish all things for the sake of their perdition, but for the sake of the glory which redounds to him from the system as a whole. And if the same glory could have been secured by a system free from moral evil, its exclusion would certainly have been effected by the infinite power of God.

In another place it is written: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." But this does not say that sin has entered among the works of God against his will, nor does it say that all his infinite resources are employed to save all men. It has no reference at all to what the almighty power and grace of God could accomplish for the salvation of all men. It sets forth what the *revealed will* of God is in relation to the offer of salvation, and the bringing of all men "to the knowledge of the truth." It amounts to no more in regard to the salvation of men than is contained in the Saviour's command: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." It is thus the expressed will of God that salvation should be extended to all, and all be brought to the knowledge of the truth. And the words "all men" have reference especially to all *classes* and *descriptions*

of men, rather than to all men as individuals. This is evident from the context. It says, prayers and intercessions, and giving of thanks should be made for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority, for God will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Pray for all kinds and classes of men, for it is the will of God that salvation be extended to all kinds and classes, and that they be brought to the knowledge of the truth. And it is obvious that the words "will have all men to be saved," do not signify *purposes* or *determines* to have all men to be saved; for, if they did, all men would be saved, or else God's purpose would not be fulfilled. But the Bible teaches that all men will not be saved, and also that God's purpose never fails. And hence, it is not God's purpose or determination to save all men that is here meant, but his will revealed in the gospel, which directs salvation to be extended to every class, character, and condition of men. "God our Saviour," that is, who is the Author of our salvation, who provides and offers salvation to us, will have all men to partake with us in this offered salvation, and brought to the knowledge of the truth. It is God's will that salvation be extended to all classes of men, and to bring them to the knowledge of the truth, but it is not his determination to save all men, whether they are believers or not. The passage does by no means teach that sin's entrance and existence are contrary to the will of God.

And elsewhere it is written—"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why

will ye die, O house of Israel?" And does not this imply that the existence of sin is contrary to the will of God? It implies that sin is contrary to his will; but it does not imply that sin exists in spite of the Almighty, that is, though he willed it should not. But when God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, how could it be his pleasure to permit moral evil? When he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, how could it be his pleasure to permit their wickedness, and consequently their death? He permits their wickedness, not because he has any pleasure in it, or in the death of the wicked—not for the sake of either, or both; but for the sake of that all-comprehensive system, which he hath arranged in infinite wisdom and righteousness, of which they constitute an indispensable part. The Lord established that system, not for any pleasure he would have in wickedness, or in the death of the wicked; but for the pleasure he would have in the results wrought out continually, by the system as a whole, under the direction of his infinitely just and wise superintendence and control. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but he has pleasure in his own works, for "all his works praise him." But if moral evil had not been permitted, his works would not praise him as they do; his praise would be very limited, compared with what it is.

But when the Lord has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and when he says, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" is it not implied that he would turn them if he could? and that he does all he can to save the wicked from death? and therefore, would not permit sin if he could prevent it? No, these things are not implied; but it is implied that the Lord hates the wicked-



ness of the wicked; and is free from all implication in their wickedness; and that if they perish the fault is all their own, their sin is their chosen way, and their wilful persistence in it, the cause of their destruction; and that the Lord has neither pleasure nor partnership in their sin and perdition. This is the proper import of the passage. It is not implied that the Lord does all he possibly can to prevent sin, or to save sinners, when he expostulates with them to turn from their sin and live. The Lord had no pleasure in the death of the wicked Pharaoh; but who would suppose that he did for Pharaoh all that he possibly could to save him? The Lord has no pleasure in the death of the idolatrous heathen; but are we to believe that the Lord has done all that possibly could have been done in order to save them? Did the Lord not have power, long ere this time, by his providence, to prepare the way, and send to them the gospel; and by his Spirit to lead them to embrace the Saviour. If the Lord has no power to send salvation to the heathen, nor to save them, why pray to God in behalf of the heathen? And if God does all he can to prevent the sin and death of the wicked, and has no power to do any more, why pray to God for the wicked? Does not every prayer that is offered for the heathen, or for the conversion of sinners, imply that God could do more for them than he is doing?—that he has the necessary power, were it only his pleasure to exert it for their salvation?—that he could save them if he would? Every such prayer is an acknowledgment that God has the power, and could prevent both the wickedness and death of the wicked, if he would. So that his expostulations with sinners do not imply that he would prevent sin if he could.

But is there sincerity with God, when he says he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and yet could save them, but does not? Who can doubt the sincerity of God, whether it can be seen *how* it is, or not? But his not turning them from sin to holiness is no evidence of insincerity; for he may have a sufficient reason, for dealing with them in justice, and leaving them to pursue their own chosen way, by which they perish, while he has no pleasure in their perdition. He may suffer to occur what he has no pleasure in, and could prevent, for the sake of some good which could not be secured without that occurrence. A father may have no pleasure in the evil learned and practised by his children at an Institution of learning; and he could prevent it by keeping them at home. But though he has no pleasure in this evil, and could thus prevent it, he may yet be willing to permit it, for sake of the advantages his children enjoy there, and could not be enjoyed if they were withdrawn. It is not for sake of the *evil practised* in the Institution, that his children are permitted to participate in it, but for the sake of the *good* accruing from the arrangements of the Institution *as a whole*. And so, good and upright men may sincerely deplore the evils propagated and practised in an Institution of learning of which they have the entire control; and they could prevent them by discontinuing the Institution. But though they could thus prevent these evils, they may permit them for sake of the good done by the Institution, from which these evils are inseparable. And they may be very sincere in lamenting these evils, and earnest in their efforts to discourage and hinder them, while they do not prevent them though they could. And the reason why the evils are

not prevented by the discontinuance of the Institution, is because the good resulting is of far more importance than the evils which are inseparable from it—more good is done by the continuance of the Institution and its inseparable evils, than would be done by its discontinuance and the prevention of its evils. And hence, these evils may be sincerely deplored by those who could prevent them, and yet do not. And so the Lord is sincere, when he says he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked; nor in the wickedness of the wicked, though he could prevent both by abolishing that moral system of which sin and its consequences are an inseparable part. If the sin were prevented, the system would be annihilated. A moral system without sin, would be altogether different from a moral system with sin. And to prevent sin would be to prevent the existence of a system of which sin is a part. And for sake of the system God does not prevent sin—to spare the system he permits the sin. The good resulting from the system with its sin, is of much more importance than the evil resulting from the sin which is inseparable from it. Vastly more good is produced by the existence of the system, notwithstanding its sin, than would be produced by the non-existence of the system and the prevention of sin. And the Lord has no pleasure in sin, nor in the death of the sinner, and could prevent both, but does not; because by preventing both he would abolish that system, which is productive of good infinitely more momentous than either. But while it is not his pleasure to abolish the system by preventing sin, yet, inasmuch as sin is voluntary, and proceeds from the free choice and disposition of sinners themselves, he may, in the utmost sincerity, remonstrate with them, and warn

them of the danger of their chosen way, and assure them that he has no pleasure in their destruction.

A man of immense wealth may have no pleasure in the poverty of his indolent and dissipated neighbor; and in the greatest sincerity he may advise him to reform, and pursue such a course as will abate his poverty, though he himself does not remove it by bestowing his own wealth upon him. He has the ability, and could remove the other's poverty at once; and though he does it not, he may be perfectly sincere in assuring the other that he has no pleasure in his poverty, and in advising him to turn from his indolence and prodigality to industry and thrift. Though he does not do all that he could do for the other, yet surely he may be perfectly sincere in the advice which he gives. And so too, though the Lord does not do all that his infinite power could effect for the wicked, yet is he perfectly sincere in assuring them that he has no pleasure in their death, and in warning them to turn from their evil ways that they may live. He may have no pleasure in their death, and yet it may not be his pleasure to turn them from their chosen sinful ways. He may, in the greatest sincerity, say to them, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" though he suffers them to go on in their chosen way, and does not put forth "the greatness of his mighty power," to change their hearts, and renew their wills, and turn them from the love and practise of sin, to the love and service of God.

On what ground could the sincerity of a benefactor be doubted, when his sympathy and assistance extend as far as the beneficiary desires? When the assistance stops only when and where the assisted would have it stop, there surely can be no ground to question the sincerity

of him who renders it. Take the case of the rich epicure. He is suffering much with gout and rheumatism, and almost blind with his "redness of eyes." His humane and sympathizing neighbor visits him, and expresses his sorrow in seeing him suffer so much. He sits down and advises him in the most affectionate manner to change his habits of living; and reasons with him on the ruinous results of the course he is pursuing, and assures him that he is exceedingly sorry to see him in his suffering condition. The poor crippled epicure looks up and says: "My dear friend, is there any thing you can do for me to relieve my suffering, or have you done all that is in your power?" The other replies: "No indeed, sir, I can do much more for you than this." And the epicure says: "What is it?" "Why, sir, I can go to your larder and empty it of its contents and send them to the poor, and order your table to be furnished for you with very plain food. And I can go and break up all your rum-bottles, and go to your liquor cellar and stave in all your whiskey-barrels, and your wine and brandy-casks, and tell your household that you want no more liquor brought to your dwelling. I can do all this for you, and this is the very kind of assistance which you need." But the epicure replies: "I love my rich food, and I love my exhilarating cup, and if that is the only kind of aid you can give, I do not want it to extend any further. If you cannot assist me in any other way, I have now as much of your assistance as I desire." His sympathizing friend assures him that by withholding from him his luxuries would be the only way in which he could relieve and save him, and still sorry for him takes his leave. Now the epicure could



not doubt the sincerity of his neighbor's sympathy, nor his expressions of condolence, and just because the assistance was extended as far as the sufferer desired. The sufferer did not want to be deprived of his indulgence, and in compliance with his wish the assistance stops, it cannot be extended any further. And when sympathy and assistance go as far, in affording relief, as the sufferer wishes, there can be no ground to doubt of sincerity.

And when the Lord says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" this is as far as the wicked wish him to go in relieving them from their sinful condition. It is not their desire that God should interfere to separate them from their sins. They love them, and they wish to indulge themselves in the practice of them. And the Lord's assistance to save them from their sins they do not want. And they show that they do not want God to do this for them, in that they never ask him to do it. They never pray to God to separate from them those sins which they love. They do not ask him to do it, because they do not want him to do it. They would be willing for God to save them from their sufferings, but not from their sins. And they sometimes pray to God to relieve them from their sufferings, but never to relieve them from their sins. And if they ever pray to be saved from sin, it is merely through the desire to escape suffering, and that is indirectly praying for the removal of suffering, and not of sin. In such cases, were it not for the suffering, either felt or feared, they would not pray for the removal of sin at all. The wicked would be willing that God should save them from their suffering, but not from sin, but this God cannot

do for them, because sin and suffering are inseparable. He cannot save them from suffering except by saving them from sin, and this they do not want him to do. And hence, his assistance goes as far as they wish it, though he leaves them to live and die in sin. They do not want to give up their beloved sins. They hate the law of God, because it forbids their indulgence. They dislike the gospel, because it requires them to forsake their sins. They find fault with religion, because it would interfere with their cherished sinful ways and pleasures. And they do not want God by any means to separate them from these beloved sins, in the indulgence of which they have their chief delight and enjoyment. And when he says, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" it is quite as far as they desire him to interfere with them, in saving them from their sinful condition. And when he extends his aid as far in that direction as they desire it, where is there any ground to question his sincerity? If they wished, and wanted, and asked him to save them from their sins, he would do it. He leaves them in the enjoyment of sin, agreeably to their own desire, and is perfectly sincere in his warnings and entreaties for them to turn and live.

Speaking of the Jewish church, the Lord says: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" And is it not meant here that infinite wisdom and power could do no more than had been done, and yet the evil was not prevented? No, the meaning is, that all the conditions to be complied with in order to a crop, had been fulfilled

—that more than he had done could not be asked for—and that not a single thing was left unperformed, which ought to be done in a vineyard in order to its yielding good fruit. The reference is to the external privileges bestowed upon Israel as the peculiar people of God. Had he not done so much for Israel as warranted the expectation that they would bring forth the fruits of righteousness, and yet they brought forth the fruits of sin? And he asks, What privileges, opportunities, and advantages could he have bestowed upon them more than they had already enjoyed, in order to their being his faithful and obedient people? He does not ask what more he could have done in their hearts by his converting and saving grace; but what more was necessary, or ought to have been done for them, in the way of external privileges, and means adapted to lead them in the ways of righteousness and life? The passage embodies a truth everywhere implied in the Word of God, of very great importance, and needs to be impressed on every mind, because very much overlooked: it is, that men are held responsible for what they *ought* to be, *in view of their external advantages*, without any regard to the depravity and rebellion of their nature. God deals with men on the ground of what they *ought* to be, and not on the ground of what they *are*. They ought to be loving and obedient unto God; and if they are not, but evil and rebellious, they have made themselves such. They commenced their rebellion in the first of the race, and they still voluntarily continue and persist in it. And what they have made themselves is no part of the ground of their responsibility. God holds them as fully bound to love and obey him, as though they never had corrupted themselves; because it is their

own work, and the work of their own free will. And hence, it is no excuse for their disobedience—it is their sin. And God is neither bound to remove it, nor to take it into account; *nor does he*, in requiring of them a service such as it ought to be, according to the outward opportunities which they enjoy. And this is what is implied in the passage in relation to Israel. It does not mean that the evil existed, though all that Almighty power and grace could do, had been done to prevent it. There is nothing anywhere in the Word of God implying that moral evil exists in spite of the Almighty, and that “he would have prevented sin if he could.” Such is the Divine Omnipotence that not only could the sinless be saved from falling; but the fallen, the guilty, and depraved are redeemed, by “the exceeding greatness of his power;” for “God works in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure,” so that they “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling;” and that too, in the exercise of their own free will, which is not at all impaired by his Almighty grace renewing their nature and inclining them to seek after God.

And though God creates and governs all for his own glory, and though in the exercise of his sovereign pleasure he permitted the apostasy of man, yet is he not indifferent to the happiness of his creatures; the benevolence of his nature is manifest in creation, and his “tender mercies are over all his works.” He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but he has pleasure in that the wicked turn from their evil ways and live. And while he “worketh all things after the counsel of his own will,” for his own glory, he does injustice to none; for he “will render to every man according to his works.” And the

wicked, who live and die in sin, and consequently perish, are not destroyed by anything that the Lord does to them, for he only permits them to have their own chosen way. They would rather have their loved, cherished, and chosen sins than anything else. They would rather have them, than to have God, or Christ, or holiness, or even heaven, if they could not have their sins with them there. It is probably true, that "Satan would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven," and that his subjects would rather serve him there than serve God anywhere else. Were the proposition made to the inmates of perdition, that they would be released from suffering if they would give up their cherished wickedness, and yield a loving obedience to the holy law of God, there is reason to believe that, rather than have to give up their wickedness, and live under the restraints of holiness, they would choose to stay where they are in the enjoyment of sin, though bearing the punishment connected with it. Such is the love of a sinful nature for sin, and such is the power of sin over a sinner, that he would rather endure the sufferings it brings, than to part with his sin. And while God glorifies himself in *the existence* of the wicked who perish, that which he does to them is permitting them to have their own chosen way. Their wicked way is their choice. And though they know that suffering is inseparable from it, yet it is still their choice. And wherein is it improper, or inconsistent with the Divine character, that they should be permitted to have their own choice?

It has been made evident that a moral system, where sin is permitted, is better adapted for the manifestation of the Divine perfections and glory, than a system would



be where there was no sin. And it appears to be incontrovertible, that the Divine character is revealed, and the glory of God set forth by the existence of moral evil, in such a manner as they could not possibly be, had moral evil been prevented. What God is *now* known to be, he could not have been known to be, if there had been no sin. As he is seen to stand in relation to sin, would not have been possible without sin. In order that it may be seen how God is affected by sin, sin must have an existence. How he feels in relation to sinners, and how he deals with sinners, could never have been seen or known, if there had been no sin. And the way in which God feels towards sinners, and the manner in which he deals with them, constitutes a part of his character. This is a very prominent, and very important part of his character. What God is relatively to sin and sinners, is certainly a special and conspicuous part of the Divine character. And this part of the Divine character could have no existence, were there no sin.

God has a twofold character. He is what he is *absolutely*; and he is what he is *relatively*. What he is, in and of himself, constitutes his absolute character; and what he is in relation to others, constitutes his relative character. If God had not given existence to anything, he would have had no relative character. He would not have been anything in relation to anything, and then he would have no character relatively. If he had not created anything, he could not have had the character of *Creator*. He could not sustain the relation of preserver, upholder, and governor, if there were none to preserve, uphold, and govern. He could not sustain the relation of moral law-giver and judge, if there were no

moral beings. So that, had he created nothing, he could have had no character relatively. He would only have had his character absolutely, consisting in what he is, in and of himself; but no character relatively, consisting in what he is in relation to others. But God now has the relative character of Creator, preserver, upholder, law-giver, judge, benefactor, Father, Saviour, &c., &c.

The absolute character of God is not dependent on the Divine will, but the relative character of God is. What he wills his relative character to be, that it is. "He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" and from his doing so, results his relative character. The relation in which he stands to all things, gives to him his relative character. And that relation is just what his own will determined it should be. So that his relative character results from the action of his own will. It depended upon his own will whether he should have any relative character or not; and also what that character should be. And that relative character must as certainly be what it ought to be, as that his absolute character is such; because the one is the result of the action of the other. The relative results from the action of the absolute. The action of the Divine will is the action of that nature which is absolute in perfection and excellence. And since the relative character of God is just what this Divine nature willed it to be, it cannot possibly be other than what it ought to be—infinite in excellence and perfection. Indeed, it is obvious, that when the relative character of God is what he willed it to be, then it ought not to be different from what it is—it must have the excellence which pertains to his own

nature. The action of his own nature, which is infinitely holy, excellent, and perfect, gives to him the relative character which he has; and therefore, that relative character *must* be what it *ought*—infinitely excellent.

And this relative character of God, which is infinitely excellent, seems to be essential to him. Can we conceive that he ought to be destitute of it? Should he not have the relative character which he actually has? Would it be possible to assign a sufficient reason why God ought not to have the infinitely excellent relative character which he has? Who would strip him of that character? But the non-existence of moral evil would be the annihilation of that character; for if there were no moral evil, God could not sustain the relations which he does; and could not have the relative character which he has. And we thus see that the existence of moral evil, is essential to the actually existing relative character of God. Were there no moral evil he would not be relatively what he now is. And ought he to be, in any respect, different from what he is? And that is the same as to say, Ought God to have prevented moral evil because he could? Some say that “he would have prevented sin if he could”; and many think that he ought to have prevented it, if he could. And if he ought, then he ought to have denied to himself the character which he has; because to prevent the existence of evil, and God to have the character which he now has, is an absolute impossibility. And to say that God ought to have prevented moral evil if he could, is to say, that God ought not to be what he is; and that he ought not to do what he does.

And the question just narrows itself down to this—

Ought God to have denied to himself the character which he has, in order to prevent the existence of moral evil? Ought he to have so arranged his affairs, that his own true character could never be revealed, for the sake of preventing moral evil and its consequences among his creatures? Must God's own nature and real character be forever concealed, in order to prevent the sufferings entailed by sin?

This is just the nature of the question to be decided. For without the entrance of sin, it is evidently impossible for the nature and character of God ever to be fully revealed. To be fully revealed, they must be revealed in relation to sin; and without sin's existence this would be impossible. A moral system, then, comprehending the permission of evil, is indispensable to the revelation of the nature and character of God. And who will venture to say that God ought not to reveal himself in this manner? Who will undertake to prove that God should not have established such a moral system, as is best adapted, and even essential, to the manifestation of his own true character, because that sin and suffering are necessarily connected with that system? And how could it be shown that the happiness of created beings is of more importance than the existence and manifestation of the true and complete character of God? Because it is doubtless for sake of the existence and manifestation of this character, that a moral system has been established, where sin and suffering have place. And the object for which that system has been established was, in the Divine estimation, of more importance, than all the suffering which is connected with it. If such had not been the case, God had not established the system at all.

We cannot but maintain, that God could have prevented both sin and suffering if such had been his will. He could have refrained from creating moral beings at all, and from establishing a moral system, and thus have prevented both sin and suffering. And even if he had created moral beings, and established a certain kind of moral system, he still could have prevented both sin and suffering; for he undoubtedly is able to save his creatures from sinning if it is his will. Every prayer that is offered up to God, asking him to save from sin, is an acknowledgment of this. If he had not power to save his creatures from sinning, praying to him to do so, would be the sheerest folly. And how any man can say, "that God would prevent sin if he could," and that it exists because God could not prevent it, and yet draw near to God in prayer, and ask him to save himself and others from sin, is most marvellously strange. Because his practice and his doctrine are directly contrary to each other. In his doctrine he says, that God could not prevent sin if he would; and in his prayer he says, that God can prevent sin if he will. And the language of his prayer is the truth; it is the conviction of his own heart; and a conviction common to the hearts of men in general; and in perfect harmony with the Word of God. The common convictions and belief of men, and the plain teachings of Holy Writ, all go to establish the truth, that God could prevent sin in his creatures if he would. And we can not possibly concur with professor Bird when he says, "that the choice to be made was not between sin and no sin, but between a moral system, in which there would be holiness and sin, and no system at all." A choice between sin and no system was not the



choice to be made; because God could undoubtedly have established a moral system without sin, if he had so willed. But the choice to be made was, between the perfect exercise of the Divine nature and complete formation and exhibition of the Divine character, and the permission of moral evil. The choice was this—Shall God be what he now is, or, shall moral evil be prevented? The choice is between the permission of moral evil, and the perfect exhibition of the character of God. If there be a perfect exhibition of the Divine character, then sin must be permitted; and if sin be not permitted, then the Divine character must be suppressed—the true nature of God must be concealed, and his proper character have no existence. Because his proper character is what it *now* is, but it could not be what it *now* is, if there were no sin. It is perfectly evident to all, that if there were no sin, the character of God would be entirely different from what it is. The character which he now has, in consequence of the relation which he sustains to the moral system which now exists, could not belong to him, if this moral system had no existence; and it would have no existence, if there were no sin. So that sin is essential to the existence of that character, which *now* belongeth unto God. And the choice was between God having that character, and the permission of sin. If sin be not permitted, he *can not* have that character; if sin be permitted, he *can*; and which ought to be? Ought God to suppress his own character, in order to prevent the evils of sin? Or ought he to be what he really is, in consequence of sin's permission? We know how God has decided this question; and who will undertake to prove that his decision was wrong?

God has established a moral system where sin is permitted, and who will undertake to prove that he ought not to have done so?

Is it inconsistent with the character of God, that for *his own sake*, he should establish a moral system, in which both sin and suffering have place? In the Bible he is represented as doing almost everything "for his own sake," and "for his own name's sake;" and so his saints plead with him to bless them "for his own name's sake," and "for his mercy's sake;" all pointing to the fact that what the Lord does, is done especially for *his own sake*. But is it consonant to the benevolence of his nature, to suppose that, for the sake of himself, he was willing to establish a moral system in which his creatures may sin and be unhappy? Such a system he has established; and did he do it against his will? Does sin and suffering exist in spite of the Almighty? Has the actually existing moral system been established, in spite of the Almighty? Who established it in spite of him? Hath not the Lord made all things, "and established them as they are this day?" And was it contrary to the benevolence of his nature to do so? Does he act contrary to, and in violation of, his own nature? When God has established a moral system in which both sin and suffering have place, it can not be in opposition to any attribute of his nature that he has done so. And there can be no attribute in his nature to prevent him from doing so.

"God is love;" but he is not love in such a sense, as to be incapable of establishing a moral system, in which his creatures may be unhappy, through their own fault; because he has actually established such a system; and

hence, his love is not such as to prevent him. If his love to his creatures was so great as to prevent him from establishing such a system, it would be greater than his love to himself. And to love his creatures *more* than he loves himself, would be sin. To love his creatures *as much* as he loves himself, would be sin. And to love them with such a love as would have prevented him from establishing the moral system which now exists, would be loving them more than he loves himself; because he would have been doing injustice and injury to himself, for their sake. He would have been denying to himself the full exercise of his own attributes, for their sake. He would have been withholding from himself the complete formation and exhibition of his own true character, for their sake. He would have been hiding and covering up, in eternal oblivion, the real character of God, for their sake. He would have been preventing God from being what he is, and ought to be, for their sake. All this would be the result of loving them with such a love, as would prevent him from establishing a system in which they may lose their happiness through their sin. And God could not love his creatures with this kind of love; it would be loving them more than he loves himself; it would be wrong; it would be a sinful kind of love. Such love can not dwell in God. He must, he cannot but love himself according to his own divine worth—with a love which is infinite and supreme.

And in the exercise of this love, which is infinite and supreme to himself, he will, and we might say must, make provision for the perfect exercise of his own attributes, and the complete formation and exhibition of his own true character. And this provision can only con-

sist in the establishment of such a moral system as now exists, in which both sin and suffering are permitted to prevail. So that even in the exercise of *the love* of God, we find a reason for the existence of such a system. Some take it for granted that inasmuch as "God is love," all that he can possibly do must just be for the purpose of making his creatures happy; as though his love could not be exercised towards himself, as well as towards his creatures. But if "God is love," he himself must be the object of it, as well as his creatures. If he is love to them, he must be love to himself; and it must be greater to himself than it is to them; and it must manifest itself to him according to his claims, as well as to them according to their claims. It must exert itself to have God glorified in the most perfect manner; and this can be done only through the existence of such a moral system as gives place to suffering and sin. And it is thus evident that though "God is love," yet it does not follow that he can not act for himself, or have regard especially to his own glory in all that he does—it does not follow that he must act for the welfare of others in disregard of himself. Because he is love, he did what he has done—established the moral system, which now is, with all its suffering and its sin. His lawful and essential love to himself would lead him to do it.

God is "a just God," as well as a God of love. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." His justice is as essential to him as his love. He can no more cease to be a just God than he can cease to be a God of love. And "will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Will he not do right towards himself as well as towards others? And has God no rights?

Has he no claims to be met? Is there nothing that ought to be done to and for him? On the contrary, are not his claims infinite? Ought not all to be done for him? And all that ought to be done for him are his rights. And he ought to be glorified in the best manner possible. This is God's right. And his justice must demand and secure this right. But this can be done only through a moral system where sin and suffering are permitted; and hence, the justice of God requires the establishment of such a system. So that if God did not establish such a system, he would not act justly towards himself. He would withhold from God what was his due. He would not give a truthful representation of the Divine character. He would not give to the Divine attributes that perfect exercise and manifestation which they ought to have. He would not allow God to be what he really is. He would not glorify God, as in justice he ought to do. But God could not act thus unjustly. And it seems to follow, that such a moral system as does actually now exist, was a matter of necessity, in accordance with the divine *claims* and the immutable *justice* of God. So that we are led to say, that God could not do otherwise than establish some such system as does now exist. And that therefore God was, as it were, obliged to establish the very kind of system which now exists. And hence, that it was not possible for him to establish a moral system, in which there should be neither sin nor suffering. This is Leibnitz's position, but on very different grounds. His view was, that in consequence of creatural imperfection, or, in the very nature of things, no moral system could be established free from evil—sin and suffering. And hence, in the nature of things,



God did the best he could do; and from all possible systems, selected and established that one which had less evil in it than any one else. It was the impossibility of having a system free from evil, that made the establishment of one having it, to be a matter of necessity. But the position to which our reasoning leads is, that the claims and the justice of the Divine Being make the establishment of such a system a matter of necessity. And is our reasoning fallacious? If it is not, we see that it was not possible for God to do otherwise than establish a moral system having evil connected with it—such a system as now exists, in which both sin and suffering have place. And if the Divine claims and the Divine justice actually required the establishment of such a system, we may cease to wonder and to inquire why it has been established. If God, from his own nature, and attributes, and character, was bound to establish the system, it was not that he had any pleasure in sin, or in suffering, or in the evil in any way connected with the system; but because he had pleasure in doing justice to his own infinitely high and holy claims. Not because he had no regard to the happiness of his creatures has he established such a system; but because he must do justice to himself. If justice could have been done to God by the establishment of a system free from evil, then such a system had been established. But as this was impossible, then a mixed moral system was a matter of necessity. It is of necessity then, that such a system exists, if creation shall answer the end for which it was intended. It was not because God had no pleasure in, or desire for the happiness of others, that he gave existence to a mixed moral system; but because his own na-

ture required it; his own attributes demanded it; his own existence could not have the relations which it must have, without it. And as we may say, the very existence of God makes the existence of such a system a necessity. His own existence demands the existence of the great moral system he hath established; and this is the reason why it is; and not because he is regardless of the happiness of his creatures. He would have preserved the happiness of all his creatures if he could have done so, without disregarding the demands of his own existence: but as it was impossible for him to do this, hence arises the necessity of a system in which they are liable to sin, and thus forfeit their happiness.

But though, to meet the demands of his own existence, he has established this system, neither he nor it is the cause of the loss of happiness to any; it is the result of their own free choice. The system is a moral system; and they who constitute it are free moral agents, created capable of choosing either good or evil, and left to the freedom of their own will. And hence, if the happiness of any is lost, it is by their own free choice it is lost; and not by anything that God has done for the glory of himself. For his own glory he gave existence to the system; and they in that system destroy their own happiness from voluntary choice. So to speak, God was under a necessity to give existence to the system; but they are under no necessity to destroy their own happiness in that system. God is accountable for the establishment of the system; but they are accountable for the loss of their happiness; the blame of it is all their own, and none of it his. He made them, and placed them in the system so that they might have retained their happi-

ness, if it had been their own choice; and if they have voluntarily thrown it away, he is innocent and righteous in all that he hath done.

For the exercise and manifestation especially of his moral attributes, has God given existence to this moral system. And in it there is a most remarkable display of his love, justice, holiness, mercy, and truth. How forcibly and clearly they are revealed through the workings of this system! And those of whom the system is composed are moral beings, endowed with moral attributes. And God warns them of danger; and apprizes them of their liability to sin, and involve themselves in ruin. And he thus shows that he takes an interest in their well-being, and desires their happiness; though for his own glory he established the system, and placed them where they are. Though it is of necessity that the system exists, and that they occupy their place in it; yet he warns, and counsels, and exhorts them, to guard against the loss of their happiness there. And gives them clearly to understand that their happiness depends upon their own voluntary conduct—that if they will obey their Creator, who established the system for his own glory, and assigns them their place in it, then their happiness shall never end. And thus in the place which they occupy, if they choose to disobey their Maker, and cast away their own happiness, none of the blame can rest upon the system, nor upon him who established it. The moral system which God hath established for his own glory, is only good; and if any of those who constitute a part of it are wretched, they are the authors of it, they have brought it upon themselves. He estab-

lished a good system, and out of his good they bring evil.

In this good moral system God assigned to the human race a very favorable position. By the covenant arrangement made with the first of the race, every individual of them had his standing and probation in Paradise, innocent and happy; and in the enjoyment of all good—the easiest possible terms of probation, and the most favorable position imaginable, for the securing of happiness without end. And this being the place assigned to every individual of the human race, it is evident, that though God established the system for his own glory, yet he was not indifferent to the happiness of those who compose it. The system was well arranged for the glory of him who established it; and well arranged for the good of those whom he placed in it. And there can be no possible ground of complaint as to the nature of the system itself; for it is characterized by justice, goodness, and excellence, in every respect. And since it was incumbent upon God to establish such a system, the disobedience and destruction of those who compose it, can afford no manner of ground to call in question the benevolence of his nature. In compliance with the infinite and essential claims of the Godhead, the system was established, and that too in goodness; the Author of it could pronounce it all very good; and now if there is any evil in it, no defects in the system have been the cause; the subjects of the evil have voluntarily brought it upon themselves.

And though it behoved the Lord to make “all things for himself,” and to do all things especially for “his own glory,” yet has he shown his regard for the happiness of his creatures, not only by placing them at first

in a most favorable position to secure their own happiness; but after they had wantonly and wickedly thrown it away, in making provision and offering salvation to the guilty. Although the race, when placed in the most favorable condition, wilfully destroyed themselves, his goodness is so great that he does not leave them all to perish, as in justice he might. He says—"I will have mercy, on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion, on whom I will have compassion." And in the exercise of this great and sovereign mercy he actually saves, from the ruin which they brought upon themselves, "a great multitude, which no man could number, out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues, and people." And when they could not be redeemed in any other way, his goodness was so great, that he gave his own dear Son to be their Saviour—to be "made a curse" for them—to bear the law's curse, its penalty, which they had incurred by their sin. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "God so loved the world, [with the love of compassion,] that he gave his only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And surely, it is beyond controversy, that God is not indifferent to the happiness of his creatures, though he "hath made all things for himself," and in accordance with the requirements of his own infinite existence established a system, in which free moral agents do voluntarily choose to bring ruin upon themselves.

And is not the goodness of God, and his regard for



the happiness of his creatures manifest, in the countless blessings continually received by a thankless and ungodly race, from his providential hand? How long-suffering he is towards his enemies who hate him, and daily trample upon his law; and despise and contemn, his love and mercy offered to them in the gospel? Does he not seek the happiness of his creatures, when he follows the wicked in their obstinacy and rebellion, with his warnings and invitations, even *beseeching* them to turn to him and live? and when every one who listens to his voice is freely pardoned, without any merit or goodness of his own? He is ready to make peace with every sinner, who will cease from his rebellion and turn to make his peace with God; and is he not good? and does he not regard the happiness of men? Although the wicked have ruined themselves, and continue to ruin themselves, yet God invites all, of every class and character, even the most abandoned and ungodly, to come to him and be saved; and assures them that he will freely forgive; and that *whosoever* cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out. But God will not, and can not, save the wicked in their sin; and their sin is voluntary on their part; if they will not cease from it, God will "let them alone," and they will perish in their sin; but not because he does not desire their happiness, or that he is wanting in tenderness and love.

Wonderful, indeed, great and good, grand and mysterious is that moral system, which the incomprehensible Jehovah has called into existence for the manifestation of himself—for the glory of his own most holy name! "God is wonderful in working, and excellent in counsel;" and who would not fear, and reverence, and adore him,

in view of the glory and grandeur of his character, as this system reveals it unto us? All his works do praise him, and his saints they bless his name.

God is glorified in all his works. And though sin has a place in the system established for his glory, he is none the less glorified thereby. On the contrary, God is glorified by the system, in consequence of sin having a place in it, in such a manner as he could not otherwise have been. But let it be observed, that it is not sin itself whereby God is glorified; but the results of that marvellous arrangement, devised in infinite wisdom and righteousness, where sin has a place, and without which the whole plan would be entirely different from what it is; and could not, therefore, answer the high and infinitely important end, to be fulfilled by the actual state of things as they now exist—by that moral system which is complete, or perfect in consequence of having moral evil.

It may be esteemed a strange idea, to consider sin as essential to the perfection of a moral system; and yet it may nevertheless be correct. A moral system is composed of moral beings. And moral beings are endowed with a sense of right and wrong, and with the power of choosing either. If they had not a sense of right and wrong, and freedom of choosing according to their own desire, they would not be moral beings. These beings then are capable of choosing either right or wrong—capable of choosing both. And since they are capable of choosing both, the system composed of them must be capable of having both, that is, both right and wrong. From the very nature of those who compose it, the system may have both right and wrong—both good and evil

in it; and then, the system is perfect only by having both; if either one be wanting, it is not complete, not perfect. If the *right* be absent, the system is wanting in what it may have; if the *wrong* be absent, it is wanting in what it may have. So that both good and evil are essential to the completeness, or perfection of a moral system. It must have both in it, in order to be what it *may be*, that is, perfect. The right and the wrong are both essential to a complete, or perfect moral system. If it had in it only what is morally right, it would be without the other element of a moral system; and would, therefore, not be perfect. So that sin is essential to the completeness, or perfection of a moral system. And this is the nature of the moral system which God hath established for the manifestation of himself—it is perfect, and therefore reveals God in the perfection of his nature and character. As we have said already, God could save moral beings from choosing evil without destroying their free-will and liberty of choice, or divesting them of their moral character; but had he thus saved them, he would have had only a one-sided moral system; what is morally wrong would have been wanting, and the system would have been incomplete—not perfect. But nothing less than a perfect moral system could possibly answer for the perfect manifestation of God. And it is by this system that God is glorified, and not merely by the sin which is essential to it.

To have *sin merely* before the mind, as that by which God is glorified, and leaving out of view *the system* of which it is only a part, is not conceiving aright of our representation. It is the system which is for the glory of God, and not sin of itself; but sin is essential to the

system. And it might be said that sin is not for the glory of God, and yet that it is, without any real contradiction; because of itself it is not for his glory, but is essential to that system which is. The system is essential to his glory, and sin is essential to the system; and thus indirectly it is for his glory, though directly it is not.

And this ought to be specially noted and kept in mind, in order to a proper understanding of the doctrine, that moral evil is essential to the glory of God. It is not the evil by which God is glorified, but the system of which that evil is an essential part. Sin, of itself, is a dishonor to God. It is a direct assault made upon his nature, and his attributes, and his government. It is opposition to God, and to all that he is and does. The aim and tendency of sin is to dethrone the Most High, to cast him down from his place of Supremacy, and even to blot out his existence. An attempt made upon the life of the Almighty, is the nature of sin. Its significance is, that he ought neither to rule, nor to be what he is. It would destroy him if it could. And it is not this, of itself, by which God is glorified. It is by that wondrous system, which God, in infinite wisdom, has established, and which would not be the system it is, if sin did not exist. Sin is not for the glory of God, but is essential to that system by which he is glorified.

And it need not be asked, "How can sin glorify God?" or "How can a sinner by his sin glorify God?" Because sin does not glorify God; nor does the sinner by his sin glorify God. It is God who glorifies himself through both sin and the sinner. It is not what the sinner does to God that glorifies God; but what God does to the sinner. He either punishes or pardons, and



in either case he is glorified; and that too, in such a manner as he could not otherwise be.

And since it is not the sinner who glorifies God by his sin, but God himself, we see the folly of those objectors, who say, "that if God is glorified by sin, then we ought to sin the more, that we may glorify him the more; and the more we sin we surely please God the better." These objections might appear plausible if sin in itself was for the glory of God; or if anything that the sinner did glorified God. But as it is neither sin nor the sinner that glorifies God, but God himself, the objections are both foolish and wicked by whomsoever made. We cannot glorify God by our sin, but God can glorify himself by it. God's creatures can glorify him in no way but by obedience. And it is their folly and wickedness to say, that they may disobey, because God is able to bring good out of their evil, and glorify himself by what they do. When we sin we are endeavoring to dishonor God, by pleasing ourselves and disregarding him, but God can turn it against us and for himself. And hence, the only wise, safe, and proper course for us is, to obey—willingly and lovingly to serve him; aiming at the end of our being—"THE GLORY OF GOD"—and then, we shall enjoy him forever.

THE END.





